

# THE SOCIAL GOOD

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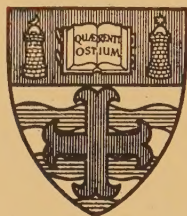
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# **THE SOCIAL GOOD**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
A PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL PROGRESS  
THE MESSAGE OF PLATO



# THE SOCIAL GOOD

BY

*Mus*  
EDWARD J. URWICK, M.A. (OXON.)

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
SOMETIME PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



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## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is an attempt to discover some of the conditions upon which the happiness of the individual citizen depends. My object is really twofold. First, there is, I think, a tendency on the part of social theorists to-day, and of social reformers and idealists even more, to concentrate their attention upon the 'large letters', as Plato called them,—that is, upon the societies and groups in which the individual is 'writ large'. The tendency is natural and excusable. Our welfare so obviously depends, in greater measure than ever before, upon vast movements, both national and inter-national, upon mass activities and mass attitudes, upon changes of purpose and idea which seem to spread, not from individual to individual, but from group to group. Will you and I be happy and comfortable—will we even be allowed to live—five years hence? The answer appears to depend upon what a Labour Party is going to do, whether Bolshevism is likely to spread, whether a League of Nations can become really powerful, whether international trade can expand peaceably, and a host of similar questions. It hardly seems to be worth while to stop and inquire what you and I and Smith and Jones are doing meanwhile; still less to inquire whether we little people are or are not becoming day by day a trifle wiser, a shade more thoughtful, a little better and more worthy to be citizens and neighbours and parents. In this book I have tried to show that, after all, the individual citizen is the *causa causans* of all change, and ultimately of all social weal and woe; and that therefore we shall best understand the conditions of our well-being if we devote more attention to the individual and less to the group.

My second reason is more personal. In a previous book I tried to explain the conception of the life of the soul as presented both in the Platonic philosophy and in the philosophy of the Vedas. This conception focuses our attention upon the extra-social and super-social activities of the soul; and the

very admission that our aim must be to escape from the 'cave' of social cares and ties seems to belittle the importance of the social life in which we are now merged. In the present book I have tried to redress the balance, by dwelling entirely upon the *social* good or happiness of the individual, and by insisting upon the intimate relation of this social good to any ultimate good, whether this latter is to be regarded as social or non-social.

I take this opportunity of expressing my indebtedness to Professor R. M. McIver, of the University of Toronto, who has read through the manuscript and made very many valuable suggestions and criticisms.

E. J. URWICK

University of Toronto,

*June 15, 1927*



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# THE SOCIAL GOOD

## PART I

### INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

**M**R. G. K. CHESTERTON once remarked, of two of the most able leaders of British Socialism, that the only thing wrong with them was that they had never realized the simple fact that men and women were human beings. I think this very pertinent truth may be applied to most sociologists: the profundity of their science obscures, even for themselves, the simple facts of social life; and, by taking society as their starting point and the evolution or change or movement of society as their theme, they carry us farther and farther away from the facts of *our* life.

Let me illustrate my meaning. I know that I have a mind and a soul. I am prepared to admit that my neighbour, Smith, also has a mind and a soul. But nothing will induce me to believe that our Town Council possesses either; I am equally sure that our nation does not possess them; and I am (if it were possible) even more sure that Humanity or Human Society (whatever that is) has neither mind nor soul. To speak of it as a being, resembling Smith and me, is simply to carry us out of the realm of intelligible and profitable discussion. In the same way it may seem plausible to regard me and my neighbour as cells in a great organism, and, by tracing the evolution of that organism, to predict what is going to happen to us insignificant mites and our descendants in the course of the next few centuries. But the discussion is not to the point, nor would it be, even if it led to any certain conclusions.

Do not misunderstand me at this stage. You may, with perfect propriety, follow Comte and predicate a kind of existence of the Great Being, Humanity. You may admire its

majestic but obscure movements towards a future which your taste may paint as bright or gloomy. And you may laugh at Smith and me for thinking that we count for anything measurable in this existence or this process. And I dare say you will be right. So too, you may, again perhaps rightly, predicate life and intelligence of everything, from the atom to the solar system. I, for one, will not dispute it. You may point out that we, with our puny intelligences, are but incidental drops in this vast living sea, and that the movements of *its* life and the purposes of *its* intelligence are the stupendous overlords of our little movements and purposes.

But when you come back from your contemplation of the great generalizations which your scientific thought has revealed to you; when you re-enter the cave of our human existence and say 'Now I will tell you whither you are going and how you must act'; then I say very confidently—'No. You have lost touch with *our* realities. You have forgotten even the meaning of human society, human progress, human good. For human society means Smith and me—and God; just that and nothing more; human progress means making better the relations between Smith and me—and God; and human good means the happiness which Smith and I may perhaps be able to find together, with the help of God. Perhaps you will smile and say that I cannot be scientific unless I cut out the third term in the relation: "Lass den Herr Gott aus dem Spass", in fact. Very well then; I will humour you at the beginning, and deal only with Smith and me. But I warn you that we shall not get to the end of our journey without putting the third term back. And it will *not* do to put any abstraction in his place, such as Humanity or the Soul of Society or any other futility. We will find reality by relating ourselves—Smith and me—to the only Being which *is* reality, and to nothing less.'

The scientific sociologists (whose ingenuity really fills me with awe) are not the only people who induce in me the feeling that I have strayed into an unreal world. Many, indeed most, of the reformers and idealists leave the same impression. They seem to take for granted the simple security of their foundation, and they proceed to build the most fascinating palaces for humanity, whose only defect is their too great perfection. Now the attraction of any Utopia is undeniable. The reasonableness of many social improvements is irresistible. The prospect of

a world, saved and restored to lasting sanity by new organization and plenty of it, is very alluring. But the serviceableness of any social structure depends upon the strength of its base ; and the base is always human nature. It is just here that I fall out of line with most idealists. The human nature which they take as their material wherewith to build a new Jerusalem is not the human nature I know. They assume that it is thoroughly good at bottom. I readily admit that it is potentially all good—and potentially very evil. I agree with Victor Hugo that ‘ man is the tadpole of an archangel ’ ; but the tadpole has a long road to travel before his wings will appear. Further, the idealists assume that human nature’s present badness or disappointing manifestations are due to the warping influences of bad environment and defective opportunity, to the lure of unnecessary temptations, to the pressure of senseless hardships, to the necessity of a bad response to bad stimuli. Remove these inducements to evil, and the latent good will at once emerge triumphant. From all this I dissent ; it appears to me to be a rude generalization which is untrue to all the particulars. But here the fault may be only in me. Let me therefore make a very frank confession. I have quite definitely come to the conclusion that the vast majority of idealists to-day are immeasurably better, purer, more moral than I. The rare exceptions are a few fellow-villains (like Dean Inge) who apparently possess much the same evil passions and propensities and impulses as myself, and are not afraid to own it. But the moral nature of all the others must be a white sheet by comparison. They are quite unconscious of any black, persistent lusts which lurk within the human heart (within mine, certainly) always ready to push out and wreck ourselves and others. They are innocent even of any consciousness of the existence of base desires and anti-social tendencies, other than those which may be engendered by a bad environment and a disordered social system.

Now, for me, I confess that, marooned on a desert island, or converted into a pleased and surprised citizen of the very best Utopia, I should still have to spend half my conscious life holding in subjection the very dangerous impulses which I am sorry to say are a real part of me. And therefore I sometimes feel that I am not fit to criticize the ideals of these latter-day saints.

Very seriously, although I am ready to believe that they are

far better than I, I do not believe that they are better than the Dean,—or any other greater teachers who have warned us against the persistence of evil. And my suspicion that there is something wrong in their assumptions is borne out by a curious fact. The idealists and reformers of the past do not leave the same impression upon me. I can talk with Plato or St. Augustine, with St. Paul or Sir Thomas More, without feeling for a moment that the people of whom they are thinking are very different from me. True, they show me that I have a painfully long way to go ; but they know my burdens, and they never assume that I can fly. Indeed, I dare to say that I believe my bad nature lay just as surely beneath the equanimity of Socrates or the Christ-passion of St. Paul as it lay on the back of Bunyan's pilgrim. And if I am right in this, then it is not foolish to think that there is something very wrong about the happy theorizing of many modern reformers. The reason is also laid bare : it is just this. Like the scientific sociologists, they are apt to forget the particular (who is real) in their contemplation of the general—which is not real at all. They think of human society—as we are all far too prone to do nowadays—with a very large ' S ' indeed ; and they then proceed to think of it as a vast something, which only needs to be moulded or organized or scientifically converted into a nicely behaved and contented Being. Another fault creeps in—also one of our besetting sins to-day. Living as we do in a triumphant age, when every day sees some new victory over the sulky resistances of opposing nature, we very naturally think that determined ingenuity, armed with the most scientific implements, can overcome any obstacles and change any evil into good. ' We can do what we like with the world '—that is our slogan. And so we have an army of confident artificers advancing to the task, some armed with the rather clumsy tools of political mechanics, some with the staggering dogmas of economic optimism, and some with vaguely attractive schemes of education. They do not agree about the method, these master-workers ; they do not agree about the immediate aim ; but they all agree in their sublime faith that you can alter the character of human society without troubling about the character of you and me. And that I take to be a fallacy.

One more fault. We all suffer from the hypnotism of catch-words : it is not only mobs which can be intoxicated by phrases, but every one of us, even the most critical, in greater



or less degree. That, I think, is why so many excellent people, who naturally long for some change for the better in our social life, are so easily deluded by the promise of progress suggested by a phrase ; and heaven knows that words are nowhere more potent than in the politics of any group. ' Given a world free from commercialism ' is the promising beginning of one writer ; and at once he has enlisted our sympathy with his scheme for knocking the business man on the head. We do not stop to reflect that it is not the poor business man who must be destroyed, but the very unruly acquisitive impulses in him and you and me, with all their hydra-headed consequences. ' If only we had a rational system of education ', begins another ; and once more we applaud. Once more, too, we fail to reflect that the very few great teachers (Plato for one) who have explained what a rational system of education really means, have never been followed and never will be, until you and I are humble enough to admit that we must go to school for life, or rather for many lives, before we can hope to be really good citizens of a really good State.

But do not think me altogether perverse. If I do not reckon on the help of the politician, the economist, the educationalist, and other builders of schemes of progress, in whom then can I trust ? All are needed ; every scrap of honest effort is needed if progress is to be made real at all. All are helpers, too, very real and potent helpers, at their best. But the strongest and wisest of them all, with the freest hand to act, would soon find himself baffled, thwarted, and at last stopped, by that Protean individual, you or me, whose infinite contrariness—to give it a kindly name—is the great fact of social life. This is why I enter a plea for a simpler, less generalized, and less pretentious statement of the problem of society's good.

I am writing frankly from the standpoint of a social philosopher, little though I deserve the name. Well, philosophy is at a discount just now. How else could it befall, in this age of scientific achievement, in which, by the steady application of the scientific method, new worlds of knowledge are continually opened to us, leading in turn to discovery of new and amazing powers ? In moments of bitterness one is sometimes tempted to say that the man who matters is the chemist who can discover a new gas wherewith we may poison our neighbours, or the biologist who can devise a culture which will prolong our

sinful lives, or the electrician who can bring all the noise of the world into our already sufficiently noisy homes. But this would be a foolish distortion of the facts. There is no need for the philosopher to imitate the perversity of Diogenes. Let him be thankful that the Alexanders of the world of knowledge are making their conquests in his day, and are bringing even to him the fruits of their discoveries, which—at the very least—enhance his enjoyment of the sunshine and widen the horizon of his contemplation. He may think that the inventions are endowing humanity with powers quite out of proportion to its ability to use them well. He may fear that the triumphs of science are piling up complexities far too difficult and too big for the rather stationary intelligence of practical people to cope with; above all, he may suspect that knowledge runs ahead while wisdom lags behind. But it is hardly for him to disparage knowledge in any form. Let him rather do his little part in trying to increase the reflection which leads to wisdom, and be thankful if his very small voice is heard by one here and one there.

But the reader has a right to ask me what I mean by the standpoint of a social philosopher. It is not easy to answer simply. Perhaps the matter may be made clear in this way. In all our thought about life, the question of *values* is all-important. Now there are two ways of assessing values. On the one hand, we may insist that the touchstone of results is the only sound criterion. We can only judge the value of an activity or a character or an institution by observing its actual effects, or by calculating (with the help of reasoning) its probable effects. When these actual or probable effects are brought into relation to our past experience, we are able to form a judgment of its value. This, briefly stated, is the scientific method. It is the method of Utilitarianism in politics and ethics, and of scientific sociology in matters of social change. And the politician and scientific sociologist both resemble the economist in this, that they send all 'goods' to market before they can assign their value,—to the actual market of trial and error, or to the imagined market of successful operation.

On the other hand, we may insist that the touchstone of value is always with us, in the form of an ideal scheme of values which forms part of the fabric of a moral universe, existing in past, present, and future, and really knowable. And in so far as we lay hold of this ideal scheme of values, in just that degree

we have a sure basis for our judgments. For we are then appealing, like Antigone in the Play of Sophocles, to

‘ Unwritten laws, eternal in the heavens ;  
Not of to-day or yesterday are these,  
But live from everlasting.’

In this view, results are of course not negligible : without reference to them it is often impossible to reach a true definition of the activity or change upon which judgment is to be passed. But results are not the decisive factor ; and calculation of future results does not enter into the judgment as a necessary or trustworthy process.

This is, on the whole, the method of the moral and social philosopher. And the difference between the two methods may perhaps be illustrated by the difference between Ruskin and a scientific economist in their treatment of wealth. For the purpose of scientific argument, Ruskin’s account of the subject is almost useless ; but in relation to life-values, many wise people consider him nearer the truth than all economists.

You may of course object that the social philosopher has now exposed himself to the criticism to which the priest and the prophet are always exposed ; for, like them, he has adopted a purely arbitrary criterion, and calls upon you to accept it without question. I admit that the analogy is a fair one : indeed, moral philosophy (of which social philosophy is an extension)<sup>1</sup> may almost be described as a kind of religion divested of dogma. For the social philosopher differs only from the religious teacher in this : that, while the latter has a *given* pattern resting on authority, the philosopher’s pattern is, in accordance with all his principles, open to criticism and amendment by every honest thinker. Yet, like the religious teacher, he conceives of a spiritual (and therefore eternal) pattern for all good—including the good of society—which alone can guide or regulate the course of progress ; and he regards society itself as a spiritual organization whose good depends upon its conformity to this pattern.

In both cases you may urge that the ideas offered are only preconceived ideas. The Platonist might answer that all truth is preconceived idea, since it has existed as idea ante-

<sup>1</sup> In this description of the relation of social philosophy to moral philosophy, I think I am following such excellent authorities as J. S. Mackenzie and J. H. Muirhead.

cedently to all human experience. But it is safer to trust to a simpler argument: namely, that the ideas which make up the spiritual pattern of good are those which the experience of all good men has approved and all honest experience has ratified; further, that the sceptic himself will affirm them (if he too is in any way good) as soon as he grasps their full significance. For the assumption of the idea of good is really universal. We never get away from it—even though we are whole-hearted disciples of Bentham. In the last resort, the assumption comes into play as the real decider of our judgments, whether we are sitting in judgment upon a character, or a completed action, or a proposal for new activity. And this must be so, since calculation and reasoning in these matters never take us to the end of the road, and, in the matter of social change, leave us floundering in a quicksand of infinite alternatives.

Moreover, the assumption is much more than a mere assumption. Leaving aside the question whether we have any intuitive knowledge of a good outside us, there still remains the fact that the *instinct* of good is the most vital element in all of us. And it rests upon a broad base: it is the outcome and expression of each man's individual character and life, and behind that, of the character and experience of all his ancestors and all his society. Consequently, when you or I base our judgment of values upon our intuitive or even our instinctive sense of the worth of things, our foundation is much more than that of personal prejudice. We are drawing upon the common knowledge implicit in every decent and reasonable mind, and upon the common experience of such minds; our basis, indeed, is the sifted experience of countless individuals transmitted to us, not by physical heredity alone, but as part of that social heritage on which our life itself depends. And this fact stands, even though we may reject the claims of a revealed truth or of a knowable Idea of Good.

But in the application of his criterion, the social philosopher does make one assumption. He assumes just that degree of similarity between organized society and each individual citizen which was insisted upon by Plato in his Republic. Without affirming the reality of any social Being, we may yet affirm that society reflects the qualities of its individual members, and that the moral judgments which are true of the individual are also valid when applied to the society of individuals. Conse-



quently, the chief source of social wisdom is within us. To know ourselves, to look within ourselves, to learn honestly our own qualities and capacities, virtues and vices, dangers and temptations and limitations and shortcomings—this is the beginning of social wisdom. It may be that occasionally we shall be misled by the peculiarities of our personal egos ; but far more often the ‘ self ’ which we learn to know is really the type, the potentially universal ego, out of which society is built. And if we are sometimes misled, we know that our personal error will very soon be revealed and made harmless by the judgment of other egos.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to emphasize the corollary to this : that, in the chapters which follow, I claim no greater knowledge nor authority than that possessed by every citizen ; and all I have written is to be taken merely as so much suggestion for reflection, so many starting points for criticism and discussion, and not at all as an addition to knowledge.

## CHAPTER I

### THE DEFINITION OF THE SOCIAL GOOD

**I** MUST begin by explaining what I understand by the Good. Unless we agree upon this, we cannot profitably discuss the conditions of its attainment by the members of society, and the nature of the obstacles which stand in the way of that attainment.

We may assert quite confidently that, for us human beings at any rate, the Good is happiness. But the happiness which is the Good for each and all of us needs very careful definition. It is not enough to say that every one knows what he means by happiness, and to leave it at that. But at once a difficulty meets us. If we appeal to those who ought to know best—to the saints and seers, to the great religious teachers, to many philosophers and some poets too—we are presented with a conception of happiness which is, for most of us, either unintelligible, or alien to all our experience, or else so far removed from our life and interests as to seem to belong to another world. For they tell us of a happiness which is an unchangeable condition of the soul; a condition, moreover, which, when once attained, is unaffected by any happenings, to one's body or fortunes, to one's environment—even to one's family and society. It is therefore not a social good, because social ties and preoccupations are not a part of it: have, in fact, no close connexion with it. Indeed it transcends all social goods. To an Epictetus it is compatible with slavery; to a St. Paul, with daily dying and continual crucifixion of the flesh. To Socrates, a purging of the soul by suffering and punishment seemed a necessary part of it; Buddha could only begin the search for it by first abandoning the most exquisite of social ties. Surely this cannot be the good for us? Are there then two kinds of Good or happiness, one in the clouds, beyond all social striving, the other on earth, adapted to the needs of imperfect citizens?

The difficulty may, I think, be resolved. If happiness is

real, there cannot be two different kinds of it ; the pattern of happiness as it is realized by the saint is also the true pattern for the citizen, and our definition must be essentially the same for both. Only, for the citizen, the pattern must be presented in simpler colours ; as an *end* for him, it must be envisaged in an easily recognizable human and social form.

Aristotle called happiness a kind of harmony. His description has rightly been taken as the starting point for most definitions of happiness. Now, since happiness for me is necessarily a condition of harmony within my consciousness, it is possible to define it as a purely subjective condition : as a harmony of feeling and function, or of impulse and activity, without reference to the functions and activities going on outside me. From this point of view, I may be regarded as completely happy if there is no trace of disharmony within my own mind. And the happiness of a social group might similarly be regarded as a harmony of function and feeling within that group.<sup>1</sup> But this limitation is, I think, untenable. Even though my happiness is only concerned with my consciousness, it must satisfy all the elements in my consciousness. And, since I am a reflective being, one of the most important elements in my consciousness is the constant thought about, and reference to, an outside world to which I am always related. Consequently, the definition of happiness—even for me alone—must not leave this outside world out of account. And I would include it by defining happiness as harmony between the whole of our consciousness and reality : that is, the harmony of our whole being (feeling, thought, activity and purpose) with the whole of reality outside us. Of course the conception of reality must be different for different people. For some it may mean a personal God and the souls of all his creatures ; for others, it may be the infinite spirit which is neither personal nor impersonal ; for others again it may be the personified Humanity, the Great Being of which we are all, in a sense, a part. These differences are not important ; but there is one essential : the happy man must believe in *some* reality, and must believe it to be good.

<sup>1</sup> Compare, for example, the definition suggested by Professor J. W. Scott : Happiness is the adequate and satisfactory exercise of function by a set of human beings living with one another. (See *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, April, 1926.)

The whole question is dealt with more fully in the note appended to this chapter.

That is to say, he must interpret reality as the container of all good purposes, and the guardian of all good activity ; and complete consciousness of harmony with these purposes and this activity is happiness. And, of course, the nearer we approach to consciousness of this harmony, the nearer do we come to happiness.

But this definition does not bring us very near to a conception of the *social* good : that is to say, the good or happiness of the citizen whose life is merged in and conditioned by society, and of the society composed of such citizens. What specific forms must the harmony take in order that these may be called really happy ? Part of the answer is, I think, suggested by those rare moments which occur in our lives and bring home to us the possibilities of harmony. I suppose most of us have experienced at times—perhaps never for long, seldom for more than a day or two—the intense happiness which floods our whole being as we move among our fellows, and realize that, in the depths of us, we are all set upon the same end, and that end is good. We are then completely one in harmony of purpose : there can be no conflict, except through the unhappy accidents of wrong vision or wrong desires. And at these rare moments we understand what a really happy society might be, and upon what very simple conditions its happiness depends.

Now I do not mean to imply that these moments of illuminative happiness are connected only with social harmony. Preachers will tell you, no doubt quite truly, that you may produce them and prolong them indefinitely by filling your soul with faith and hope and love. You can thus create a kingdom of happiness within you, and attain to the condition which St. Paul called Autarchy—not self-government merely or self-sufficiency, but soul-supremacy. Then you are independent of all environment, including your body with its ills and your social setting with its defects. But for the citizen, it is clear—if these moments of social happiness have any validity—that harmony with his fellow-citizens or neighbours is a prime essential ; and this we may expand to include the following elements : First, the feeling on the part of the citizen of his oneness with all his good neighbours, and a belief that their goodness is potentially universal ; secondly, the knowledge that his relations with his neighbours are really based upon goodwill and mutual understanding ; thirdly, the faith that his own activities are in line with theirs, and tend to a common



good ; and fourthly, the certainty that his purposes are in tune with the general welfare.

But we are still rather in the clouds. The citizen does not live merely by dwelling in unison with his fellows. His life is made up of activities, of the pursuit of ends for himself and others, of reciprocal services, of all kinds of joint efforts and actions and feelings ; and through all these must run the essential harmony. We must assert, therefore, that there must be harmony of the human consciousness with all those parts of the environment which (for the present at least) we must regard as real ; that is to say, not only with the ultimate aims of our neighbours, but with their activities and pursuits and feelings and purposes in detail ; not only with the Reality which is behind or within all things real, but with the quite definite realities of our own bodies and faculties, our whole social setting and the material which it provides. These, at any rate, must be sufficient for us—and congenial ; for the deeper harmony cannot persist unless the very aims and purposes upon which it depends can be translated into action without continual thwarting and friction. For, once more, we must remind ourselves that, for the citizen, happiness means happiness in activity, that is, in the constant give and take of service which is the essence of social life. It follows that we must assume our citizen to be provided with a kind of raw material of happiness, in the shape of an environment which furnishes the requisite conditions for an harmonious life. For, since the citizen with whom we are concerned is just the normal, average person, it is clear that we must not ask him to make the bricks of happiness without the straw of certain essential elements which society itself must provide or help him to find. What then are these essential elements ? That is to say, what must you and I have in order that we may be fully equipped for our progress towards the Good ?

At this point I must needs be a little dogmatic, but not, I hope, unreasonably so. A frank analysis of our own consciousness and the conditions of our life indicates the chief essentials. We are all *agents* : consequently we must have the opportunity for continued and purposeful activity. Secondly, we are all *minds* : the quality of our life is largely determined by the streams of thought, perception and appreciation which constantly flow through our minds ; consequently, we must have adequate opportunity and material for satisfying interests.

Next, we live hand in hand with emotion ; and, as social beings, the emotions which matter most are of course those of attachment to other social beings ;—so much so, indeed, that affection for persons is and must always be the keystone of our happiness as members of a society. Consequently, we must have opportunity and material for companionships, of varying degrees of intimacy. Fourthly, we can neither do nor be anything significant without a controlling aim or purpose : we are idealizing beings, and in a real sense we live by our ideals. Consequently, we must have the freedom to make and follow an ideal in life. And finally, we have a physical existence which means a great deal to our happiness. Consequently, we must at least be provided with enough bodily vigour and health to enable us to act, develop interests, fulfil affection, and follow an ideal, without excessive hindrance from weaknesses of body or of mind.

We may therefore affirm that the elements which are normally necessary to our happiness are these :

1. Work : if possible, congenial work ; but in any case, work.
2. Strong interests, and opportunity to develop such interests.
3. The companionship of people whom we like, and who also like us ; and therefore, constant reciprocity of service.
4. An ideal to live for, in ourselves, if not outside also.
5. Immunity from severe physical hindrances, as well as from too great care or anxiety.

These, I think, are the essential conditions of the pursuit of happiness ; we may safely assert that whoever has these conditions fulfilled for him has happiness within his reach. I do not, of course, say that he is necessarily happy ; nor do I say that a society in which these conditions are offered to all is necessarily a happy or even a good society. But I assert that no society is good in which these conditions are not within the grasp of all its normal members. For these at least we must have if we are to be well equipped, as artists in life, for what R. L. Stevenson called ' the continent art of living '.

You will notice that some common goods are implied : for instance, the last condition involves the possession of a reasonable measure of health, and of capacity for work and interest, and a very reasonable measure of wealth. But some of the goods aimed at by every society to-day, which would claim the name of progressive, are not obviously essential conditions of

happiness. Wealth is not, if by wealth is meant a great and manifold mass of the means of satisfaction. Increased knowledge is not, if by that is meant increased power of achievement—although knowledge is clearly essential as a source of interest and an end of effort. Complex organization is not, except so far as it is necessary to guarantee the conditions of striving and attaining for all. Supremacy and distinction are not necessary; still less the outstripping of rivals in trade or any kind of greatness. For, when all is said, the happy man does not ask to reach any coveted goal—other than the consciousness of having striven well and served well.

Again, it seems reasonable to urge that the one thing needed is to clear the ground of inequality in order that all may have a fair chance to seek and find their good according to their own choice. The first essential of happiness, therefore, is the removal of privilege and the provision of equality of opportunity. I am afraid that so many fallacies lurk behind the use of the word equality that we shall find it prudent never to use it at all. Equality of opportunity belongs to a world in which nature will no longer be allowed to be so grossly unfair as to endow us with such different powers; in which also our fellows will be restrained from that perversity which prefers to honour other people more than us. But if you plead for a fairer chance for the underdog, and for freedom, not in word but in fact, for all, you will find that this is implied in the final condition of happiness which I have given. Beyond that we cannot go at present. If the condition seems vague, or even begs the question at issue, I can only urge that no more precise definition is possible until the end.

I will try to explain each condition in turn, pointing out what social arrangement or equipment is needed for its fulfilment, and I will then examine the hindrances in ourselves, in society, and in particular tendencies of social development, which chiefly prevent the attainment of the good by all of us.

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#### NOTE ON THE DEFINITION OF HAPPINESS

*(with special reference to the definition of the rational good by, e.g.,  
L. T. Hobhouse)*

I assume that the harmony must be between the self and its full consciousness on the one side, and an objective reality on the other. It is not enough to describe it as continuous har-

mony between feeling and experience. We may usefully follow, to a point, the analogy insisted upon by Hobhouse between cognition and feeling. Just as the rational end for cognition is complete harmony of all judgment and assertion with all experience and fact, so the good which is happiness is complete harmony of all impulses and their satisfactions with the whole feeling-experience of life. In both cases the conception of a rational good compels us to assume an objective harmony to which the subjective harmony is related. In the case of cognition this is a knowable reality which is of course consistent throughout. In the case of feeling, we assume not only the reality of other human beings, with their impulses and satisfactions, but also a possible harmony among all these other people, so far as their general impulses and purposes are concerned. And this in turn presupposes a real end which is the goal of all good effort. For this reason I have insisted upon harmony of our purposes with the real purpose, which must be believed to be good.

But in one important particular, the cognition-harmony differs from the feeling-harmony. Both may be said to involve (for us) a continual striving: the good is never complete. But in the case of cognition, the striving involves no disharmony. It is simply a process, however strenuous, of re-forming judgments into ever completer agreement with experience. In the case of feeling-harmony, the striving is and must be a continual struggle, involving some pain and dissatisfaction. It is often suggested (I think Hobhouse accepts the suggestion) that this cannot be necessary, else it would eternally defeat the harmony aimed at. It is urged, therefore, that no impulses need be actually repressed, but that all may be and should be guided to forms of satisfaction which are compatible both with the consistent organization of our own life-purposes, and with the equal good or satisfaction of others.

This I believe to be a dangerous error. Take, for example, the impulses connected with sexual desire, or with certain refined forms of greed, especially the desire for stimulants. Grant that under certain conditions, and for a time, these may be side-tracked or sublimated, and so allowed to be active and yet to lead only to satisfactions compatible with the harmonious good life. Nevertheless, it is, I believe, incontrovertible that—over a great part of every normal life—there is no alternative whatever but to repress, thwart and deny these impulses, with



much effort and pain, and much feeling (at first, at least) of disharmony. I am aware that it is not easy to give the grounds for this belief. Only the experience of really good people is pertinent: I cannot therefore appeal to my own. But a fairly intimate knowledge of some good people has convinced me that in their case, without exception, the assertion holds good. And it is further borne out by the very plain teaching of the greatest moral authorities, such as Plato, St. Paul, and Christ himself. Consequently we must go on to assert that such disharmony does not at all matter, any more than the disharmony caused by plucking out and casting away an eye matters in relation to the really good life. It only matters if we regard happiness as a harmony of feeling. It does not interfere with that harmony of the whole consciousness with reality which is the essence of the definition of happiness. Another point to note. It is very commonly believed nowadays that all suppression of fundamental impulses (especially those of sex) is entirely dangerous. If this is true of *normal* natures, then indeed the moral teaching of all our masters has been false, not in part but utterly and fundamentally. But I believe that our descendants will realize, more than most of us now do, that the fashionable psychology has applied to the normal the facts discovered mainly in the study of abnormality—an error which is discernible in other fields also, in educational theory, for example.<sup>1</sup> The error may have this excuse, that the range of abnormality is, in our present disordered civilization, much wider than it used to be. But an error it remains, and a subtly dangerous one. For when the psychologist or the educationist asserts the principle of no suppression or repression of impulse, it is not only individual conduct which suffers. Every principle adopted as a guide for the individual is quickly repeated in the principles advocated for social rule. We may, as individuals, feel some qualms in applying so tempting a principle to our own behaviour. But sentiment, or sentimentality, always masquerading as virtuous feeling, enlists our sympathy on the side of the free and unrepressed satis-

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that the dominant theories of psychology and education and every other socially applied branch of investigation are in part themselves the result of the social tendencies which they reinforce. The psychologist is both follower and leader in this matter; why blame him more than the society of which he is part? He will make new discoveries when society is in a different mood.

faction of desire on the part of other individuals or classes of individuals, and convinces us that the sympathy is invoked in a righteous cause,—especially when we are rather guiltily conscious that there *are* individuals and classes for whom repression has long been the rule, far beyond any reasonable justification for it. There follows inevitably a long succession of attempts to produce social harmony by opening doors to satisfactions which have hitherto been closed by moral law; by toning down the ‘disharmonies’ of duty and discipline until ‘I *must* have this satisfaction’ or ‘I cannot be happy without it’ is taken as full justification of the claim to have and enjoy it. Laws and punishments are modified, softened, or abolished; the *necessity* to struggle on, to endure, to go without the coveted satisfaction, is first deplored and then denied; and we begin consciously to take as our goal a social harmony which shall result from all-round satisfaction of as many desires as possible, with the minimum of discipline, negation, or repression.

But the true harmony, both for society and for the individual soul, is *not* a harmony of satisfied impulses, but a harmony of conscious purposes; and this is not only compatible with, but probably dependent upon, constant denial of self-seeking, continual suppression of impulses, unending discipline of desire. The *end* for both is doubtless a harmony in which no pain or negation will remain; but the end cannot be attained until both individual and society have become good.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ESSENTIALS OF HAPPINESS

#### THE SIMPLE ESSENTIALS OF HAPPINESS CONSIDERED IN DETAIL

##### *I. The First Essential—Work.*

MANY modern philosophers have insisted upon the importance of the *creative* element in happiness ; and they are doubtless right. Simply stated, this means that we are, all of us, happiest when we are doing or making something really worth while : when, in fact, we are consciously adding a little to the created provision of the instruments of a good life. For then our power seems likest God's : we are at the pinnacle of our being. But this creative activity cannot be confined to the artist and inventor. It has and must have a far wider range—a universal range, indeed, since it is, in some form, within the reach of every normal human being. We may say, with truth, that the creative element enters into all work of which it can fairly be said, ' This is a continuous activity which expresses my aims and purposes, and causes something new and something needed to exist.' Now it is only by such activity as this that we can express our *significance* ; and since the significance of the citizen must be primarily a *social* significance, we may add that the work by which he expresses it must be work of some real social value ; that is to say, some form of sustained effort whose aim and effect it is to increase the social well-being. And I affirm, very resolutely, that the good cannot be attained by any normal individual without the condition of regular, sustained work in this sense.

But observe that our definition includes much more than work in the economic sense. The latter does not include any effort which is not actually paid for or marketable : that is the sole test of its economic value. But the work of real social value includes, of course, the mother's work, the wife's work, and the unpaid and perhaps unpayable work which many

devoted people give to their neighbours continually as their duty and their privilege. And we must add, too, much honest effort which fails of its aim, provided that the intention of the effort is to increase the good or beauty or harmony of life somewhere.

Now you will notice at once how the conception of work has been distorted by the fallacies of an economic age. Work has been subordinated to wealth production : that is to say, the whole reason for work is supposed to be simply the need for increased and diversified forms of satisfaction. This is the first fallacy, akin to the strange notion that the labour of tilling the ground was laid upon Adam as a curse and not as a blessing. For work is, of course, a good in itself, whose value lies largely in the sustained effort of doing and creating, and in the conscious interest of it—as well as a good for the sake of its result. And this result is not merely the production of an added means of satisfaction, but often just the consciousness of something worthily done, of some effort well directed and well sustained.

The effects of this distortion are disastrous. Work has been robbed of half its character as a good in order to magnify the other half. This, of course, is no new thing : it dates back to the closing of the Garden of Eden. But as the economic interest has grown stronger and has been exalted from its original position as a necessary interest to a position as a chosen and honoured interest worthy of all or nearly all our best efforts, our attitude to work has become more and more distorted—as may be seen, I think, by comparing the medieval craftsman at his best with the most efficient trade operative of to-day. The former had, for a time at least, an almost religious feeling about his work ; the latter has a pride in his skill, but seldom regards it as an instrument wherewith to serve his community. The workmen of to-day are not to blame ; as is the case with so many of their mistakes, their employers first set the example and made it almost inevitable that the workers should follow it. The employers began by concentrating upon commercial gain as the one result that mattered ; and they treated the work of the employees solely as a means to produce that gain. So the workers in turn came to regard their work solely as a means to produce wealth for themselves—and as nothing else whatever. It is no longer thought of as an instrument with which to increase social wealth and welfare ; no longer as a means with which to add to the beauty and dignity and com-



fort of our joint environment. It has become like the investor's capital—simply an instrument for the production of income for the owner. And, as in the case of capital, so in the case of work ; if it can be made to produce an equal or a greater wage with more sparing and more economical use, so much the better. If the worker finds that he can obtain the full money reward for himself by putting forth only 90 per cent. of honest effort, why should he expend 100 per cent. ? For the sake of good work ? For the sake of his community ? For the sake of his own honour as a workman ? But his employer's example has made it difficult for him to think of these other motives.

This is the first and perhaps most disastrous of the labour fallacies ; and it is not of labour's own making. Closely connected with it is the difficulty, in every industrial community, of ensuring work for all willing workers at all times. A million workers are at this moment begging for work ; they really mean, not work, but the wage to which they regard work as the irksome means. We say that we cannot give them work ; meaning again that we cannot give them the wealth which their work ought to earn. But both we and they know that if they—and all of us—cared for our work, thought of it as a necessary ingredient of happiness, thought of it too as something to delight in doing, even if it is only road-sweeping ; both because it is necessary to our happiness and also because every hour of it, if well done, adds more than an hour to the sum of human welfare ; then there could no more be unemployment than there could be widespread asphyxiation due to lack of ordinary air to breathe. For the opportunities for work are as universal as the air : there is at all times more than enough work for all—and will be, so long as we all have wants which are still unsatisfied ; and, with the equipment of the world to-day, even poor work poorly done, if the effort is honest, produces enough for any man to live upon. The very existence of unemployment means one or both of two things : general inability to face facts honestly, or sheer refusal on the part of some workers to make their work really productive of what they receive for it.

Can there be any doubt that our descendants will call this a mad age—not alone because of our war-madness, but because of the equal madness of our peace mentality ? Increased wealth is the aim of our economic activities, quite naturally and rightly. We are very intent upon that aim, and concen-

trate perhaps three-quarters of all our effort upon attaining it. Yet all the time, deliberately and with open eyes, we destroy or paralyse a large part of our strength. We have known for a hundred and fifty years that wealth is automatically increased by free exchange; yet we purposely limit and prevent this automatic increase by putting barriers in the way of free exchange. We know that the chief capital of every country is its labour power; yet we allow a tenth of this capital to lie idle, even though it is crying aloud to be used. Is it sane? Hundreds of thousands of our citizens are begging for the right to work. Think of the descendants of Adam clamouring for the *right* to work!—in a world, too, in which more than half the inhabitants believe, with some reason, that they are overworked. If it were not so tragic, the position would be Gilbertian. Yet it is really necessary to assert, with all gravity, that society must provide the right to work for all its members if it is to fulfil the very first condition of the good.

In an ideal State, I suppose every citizen would have free choice of activity, and his work would always be congenial to his tastes and powers. He would both choose and hold voluntarily his place in the social work-system. But this is clearly impossible in any condition of industry known to us to-day. All boys cannot be electrical engineers, nor can all girls find employment on the cinema stage. We must do the work that needs to be done; and we have to accept that fixed condition just as we have to accept the weather. There is some choice even to-day; but it is limited for us all. It might and should be far wider: it is safe to assert that progress in industrial organization will not be progressive unless it opens a wider choice for all. But the hardship of limitation is not, I think, chiefly the hardship of being compelled to take uncongenial work. There are times when most of us dislike our work very heartily, and would change it if we could. That is inevitable: perhaps not one in ten thousand people has either the temperament or the capacity to be an Edison. But even if our work seems often to be an uncongenial task which we do daily because we must, it nevertheless serves its purpose as a condition of happiness. The task to be done gives the first significance to our life—and we know it. The task to be done is the justification of our citizenship; and we know it. The task duly done is the foundation without which all other activities are baseless and artificial; and we know that too.

I have spoken of the necessity of regarding our work as a privilege and as a service. It is only this that I mean. We need to keep before us the knowledge which we really possess, that our work, wearisome as it often is, too hard or too long as it often seems, uncongenial as it may be, is nevertheless the one function which gives us the right to join fearlessly with our fellows in the pursuit of happiness; the one universal reciprocal service upon which our common life depends. But I do *not* mean that the normal motives to work are likely to be superseded by the new motive of desire to serve our fellows, or any other exalted motive. We go to work chiefly because we want to earn something; we go on with our work because we cannot earn unless we do. And this kind of compulsion is necessary. To pretend that it can be abolished is a false idealism. There are many who ask us to believe that we have only to sweep away the competitive basis of industry, and we shall find the workers going to their work glad of the chance of serving, impelled to work well for sheer love of the work. It is illusion. It is plausible only because it mistakes the possibility of a fine beginning for the possibility of an equally fine continuance of long sustained effort—a mistake to which most idealists are remarkably prone.<sup>1</sup> Now it is very easy to affirm the rejection of the competitive spirit and abolish it by acclamation. But a world struggling on year after year without the competitive spirit would not be a world of human beings. It would also be very easy to start off on our new tasks in a regenerate world, with an eagerness to work lit up and fired by the enthusiasm of service. But what of the dragging hours of monotonous toil, every day for week after week and year after year, unending and unchanging? Will the flow of enthusiasm endure through these? It is an illusion: the idealist is once more misled by his mirage. He has not visualized Smith and me as we are on earth. We may be worthy citizens; we may be industrious workers. But we should dearly like to knock off our daily work an hour or two earlier, take many more days holiday than we get, and ease the strain at every turn. Service

<sup>1</sup> This is a fallacy with which we shall have to deal at greater length in a later chapter. It is common to all idealists—perhaps to all of us when we want to prove the permanent possibility of something of which only the beginnings at present exist. And the commonest form it takes is that of regarding as normal those ‘super-efforts, super-sacrifices, responsive to high incitement, but not to be indefinitely maintained’ which so often accompany the introduction of a new idea.



of our fellows? Well, our fellows all want to do just what we want to do; and they will do it too, unless close watch is kept upon us all. We work because we must. Let us be thankful that this compulsion is also in harmony with our good.

I must add a word or two about a very different class of workless people—the unfortunate people upon whom no necessity is laid to perform the life-function of work. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the perversity of allowing willing wealth-producers to be idle when they are ready and keen to work is not very much greater than the wilful perversity of the many individuals who forgo the blessing of work when it is within their reach. Surely the greatest stupidity in the world is the stupidity of the idlers. There is perhaps no greater cause of wanton loss of human happiness than the self-inflicted idleness of thousands of well-to-do women and many men. One cannot say that they toil not neither do they spin. The effort of killing time is a toil; the effort of trying to find happiness where it does not reside is the hardest toil there is. But the activities which such effort involves are pointless, aimless and productive of nothing. And for that very reason those who are engaged in them seldom have or can find an ideal to be followed through life. The absorbed money-maker is often nearer to being an idealist than his wife. Yet the blame is not altogether theirs. Those whom circumstance does not compel to work are the victims at once of too much choice and of too little. Too much, because any occupation seems open to them. Too little, because the fallacy of unemployment ties their hands. If they would work, they are told that they cannot enter the labour market without displacing some one who sorely needs the wage; and so they are debarred from even attempting to lighten the toil and share the burdens of some of their over-worked fellow-citizens.

## *II. The Second Requisite: Strong Interests.*

The possession of strong interests is a condition of happiness which is beyond dispute. How else shall life be interesting? So equipped, life's artist can make dulness itself interesting, and needs no fictitious aids, no paraphernalia of amusements, to help him. But there is a special reason to-day for putting interests in the forefront of the conditions of the individual, and indeed the social, good. We have not yet grasped the significance of universal leisure as one of the big *new* facts of our



social life. For just a hundred years we have agitated, striven, schemed and legislated to lessen the hours of work. We have reduced them from 12 to 8. But the by-product of our efforts—the creation of a new time-surplus, as it has been called—has so far been neglected. Four hours a day of new leisure : 1,200 hours a year per head of the population : what are we doing with it ? What use are we learning to make of it ? Are we to be content to think (as, like fools, we have so long thought concerning our surplus wealth) that the expenditure of this huge surplus may be left to take care of itself ? That it is of little consequence how we spend it, provided only we have got it to spend ? If so, let us be prepared to see a baffling increase, not of crime only, but of that general tendency to misbehaviour which is already alarming both England and America.

For we may as well admit at once that the Anglo-Saxon is not naturally fitted to use his leisure peaceably. He seems to excel in all the more violent methods of 'recreation' ; he loves sport and out-door games and any form of rapid movement ; especially does he delight in 'going around' to see new sights. But he is inferior to most of the world, both East and West, in the ability to enjoy leisure quietly in or near his own home. He has little real love of music ; he is seldom content to sit round a fire or under a tree and just pass the time in talk ; he will play indoor games of chance for love of gambling ; but there his ability to amuse himself ends. Most of all he seems to lack the taste for the simplest *social* recreation. In other countries the café or the beer-garden is a real social institution, the regular resort of quiet families who are happy to spend their leisure side by side, with the simple entertainment of friendly social contact. We say that we cannot copy this habit because of our climate. The real reason is that our nature or taste is opposed to it. It is too dull and too quiet for us ; we must be doing something or seeing something—or our leisure seems wasted.

Let us accept this national characteristic. What then ? Are we to fall back upon the clever purveyors of amusement or interest to fill up our leisure for us, because we cannot use it unaided ? Must we just look for an endless increase of theatres, exhibitions, cinemas, displays of games, wireless entertainments and all the host of external aids to mental indolence and effortless occupation of our leisured minds, varied by excursions in cheap automobiles which minister to our physical indolence by

providing effortless locomotion for our leisured bodies? If so, the sure increase of misbehaviour already begun will soon be accompanied by a sure decrease of energy and capacity and health. For I take it as certain that to feed the mind without also exercising it is a quick road to degeneration, and to rob the body of its natural function in locomotion is an equally quick road to disease.

The physical danger does not concern us at the moment. It is a danger chiefly for the middle-aged, presented to them by the Henry Fords of our time, and accepted gratefully as a benefaction. They may be left to discover the error for themselves. I think they will discover before long that a biped's health depends upon the use of his legs. An army may march upon its stomach, but a civilized society cannot. It must march upon its legs, or decay; the unkindest gift to anyone in a too sedentary civilization is the gift of tempting substitutes for natural movement. Children and young people, and some older ones too, would save themselves if they could by following the healthy natural impulse to exercise, which finds its outlet in games of all sorts. Their salvation is denied them in most cases, and will be denied them, so long as civilized life means crowded city life. For who can solve the problem of providing space for its games for the youth of a city of one or two or six million people?

The danger to the mind is our present concern: the danger resulting from disused and misused leisure. And this too is a social question—as is any misuse of resources or opportunities. We have accepted the increase of leisure as a good in itself, just as we accepted the increase of wealth as a good in itself. Ruskin pricked the bubble of our complacency in regard to the latter: we are slowly—very slowly—beginning to see that he was right when he declared that the value of any wealth was dependent upon the owner's 'valour' or power to use it well. We need another Ruskin to expound the real value of leisure. Leisure may or may not have an intrinsic value in the hands of a cultured leisure class—though I think the social advantages of such a class have been fantastically exaggerated. But there can be no question about the social consequences of leisure in the hands of a whole population which is neither cultured nor educated nor naturally equipped with interests. Those consequences are being forced upon our notice very pointedly. We are finding out that the uninterested mind involves much

more than loss of possible happiness to its owner : idle minds are far more powerful allies of the devil than are idle hands : the poisons they may generate are more destructive than any action. For let it be remembered that we have not now to do with *empty* minds : they are being fed hourly by an environment which offers every sort of material—food and poison, truth and falsehood, good suggestions and bad, healthy stimulus and harmful—all thrown to us together, ready to be received undigested by every man or woman or child who has ability enough to read and spare time enough to gape at any passing show. I think, therefore, that no excuse is needed for placing interests only second to work among the requisites of the happy individual and the good citizen.

Now the capacity for interest, like the seeing eye, is inborn ; and it is certainly one of the most valuable of nature's gifts. If only a eugenist could ensure that none but interested people should be born, he might do as much for the world as by ensuring the supply of healthy people. Observe, I say 'interested', not 'interesting', though perhaps they are seldom very far apart. For interest is like curiosity : it grows by use, and its growth increases the store of power to interest others. That, however, is not the important thing for our happiness, nor perhaps for the happiness of others ; an interested listener is a much more valuable neighbour than an interesting talker.

Fortunately, the power of interest can be drawn out and increased by education ; and this is one of education's great functions, next in importance only to the functions of strengthening the understanding and teaching discipline or orderly control of all the faculties. But it is not the chief function, as some educators are inclined to think. If education performs well the other two, it is not likely to fail in performing this one also. The function deserves special emphasis here. There are no rules for the education of interest : no conditions of subjects to be taught or methods of teaching. A good teacher educates interest and fixes the habit of interest whatever the subject taught—even Latin ; a poor teacher fails to do it even with the most fascinating of subjects—even science. Also, it is the power and the habit of being interested which is all-important. The full development of the power is a life-long process, continuing until decay begins. For nothing is more certain about youth and age than this : that the power to feel, see and appreciate the fulness of experience—its depth, and

above all its significance—grows with every year of life, so long as we are really growing at all. As children, we marvel at a rainbow or a storm ; soon a single petal of a flower will be enough to draw our wonder and absorb our attention ; in old age a grain of sand will leave us spellbound, for we shall see all the universe in it. Perhaps that is why the very best teachers, if old, are not good for the young ; they are too far advanced in interest.

Now no society need fail to supply all that is needed to enable all of us to fulfil this second condition of good. Indeed, many would say that the world at large now does all and more than all that is needed to teach us. It is packed so full of interest ; and every day new interests are added. We all say ' Would that we could be alive a century hence, to see all the new developments '. But I think that is a delusion ; certainly it is not what I mean. Life is not equally interesting to every one ; but it is equally interesting to the capable minds of every age. And it is not the people who see most new things who get the greatest interest out of life. I am not sure that panoramas of new things do not actually lessen our interest ; they certainly create an inimical habit of expecting interests to come to us ready made, in place of the habit of making them for ourselves. I doubt whether any class of toilers shows a better record of interestedness than shepherds, who seldom see anything moving except their sheep, and the ever-changing face of nature. But they could see when a new light came into the world, and recognized it before all others. Interest does not demand change : there is always enough or too much of that. Rather, the interested man is always asking changing things to stand still a little more, that they may be better observed and dwelt upon.

See how all this reflects upon our world and its tendencies. Is it becoming easier to live happily ? Are conditions more favourable for the artist of life ? That great sorcerer, the world, has never been a good teacher, and never will be. He provides us with varying entertainment, fuller and richer to-day than ever. Possibly we are grateful : perhaps the Roman populace was grateful to the Emperors who kept it amused with circuses and games. But I am very sure that we—like them—ought not to be grateful. Rather should we be suspicious, like the wise Trojan <sup>1</sup> who feared the Greeks even when

<sup>1</sup> Laocoon.



they brought gifts which seemed to be gifts for the gods. It is unpopular to say so, however, and even dangerous ; you may remember that that particular old Trojan came to a sudden and painful end, and every one said it served him right. But Troy would have been saved if the Trojans had listened to him. Well, the gifts of the world are not quite so bad as the great wooden horse which the Greeks gave to the Trojans for their undoing. But at their best they are neutral gifts. If they do not hinder, neither do they help us. They do not make life more interesting, because it is only we ourselves who can do that. They make our life more complex and much more difficult to manage ; and if harder work and stiffer tasks mean a more interested life, then indeed they do give us that.

One must walk warily here. If I belittle the wonders of this age and the amazing interest of them, you will say, perhaps rightly, that I am more deeply sunk in the obsolescence of old age than any ancient *laudator temporis acti*, and less skilled in the art of living than any of the brave old ladies who insist upon going up in an aeroplane because they will not be left out of any new thing. And the reproach would be just. No one but a perverse fool would refuse the enjoyment of seeing and savouring and marvelling at the inventions of the modern world : as well refuse to look up if a new comet appeared in the sky. Even a Diogenes would come out of his tub to see that, especially as he could do it at night—unseen. But Diogenes would not admit that the comet was necessary to his happiness, nor that a succession of comets could add to it anything vital. And I agree with Diogenes. The richer world will not help us to live well. The ocean of life is always full ; if you know any of the depths of it, you know that. It is only when you live on the edge of it that you attach much importance to the additions brought down by the inflowing streams.

### *III. The Third Requisite : The Companionship of People whom one likes and who also like one ; and therefore Constant Reciprocity of Service.*

Of all the conditions of happiness, none is more obvious than this, and none will arouse more dispute. For when we ask—‘ What must society provide or ensure for us in order that we may find the companionship of people we like ? ’ there is only one possible answer. It must give and guard the fixed, indissoluble, particularist family. I can hear very

plainly the storm of protest ; and it does not come only from the revolutionaries who, like Bakunin, find ' that pestilent system of family affections ' an obstacle in their way, nor from the more moderate communists who quite honestly believe that the family is the arch-enemy of the communal feeling. No ; every one of us is a little inclined to protest when the family is held up as the seed-bed and nursery of friendship. It may have very good uses ; but that is hardly the chief of them. Most of us have suffered at some time from too much family ; and some of us have never got over the complaint. For the home is the one place where no prophet is properly honoured ; where all our defects are very clearly seen and proclaimed, while most of our virtues pass unnoticed. It is indeed that ever-present, lynx-eyed critic in the home that poisons our life, and robs it of the serene beauty which we know it deserves. It is rather like conscience : life would be quite a pleasure without it. Give me only my friends, to see when and where I will, and I will show you the sunny, sweet-tempered person whom I know myself to be. When I am tired of them, I can retreat to my citadel and find peace ; when I want to commune with them, I can go forth and find them again. But what chance have I with such a family as it has pleased Providence to afflict me withal ?

I am not now concerned with the sociological or moral defence of the family. Perhaps some artificial grouping of children would provide an equally good nursery of citizenship ; perhaps the inculcation of wholesome standards would be performed by selected foster parents even better than by most natural parents ; perhaps the mental and moral health of the new generation could be more surely secured by handing over to society the care of the young. That may be an arguable position ; but I am not interested in it now. I am thinking only of the natural family as the first condition of the best companionship or friendship. If you consider what it is that we are looking for when we search for a friend, you will find that we are not seeking for an *alter ego*—one is enough—but for some one who may be very unlike us in many ways, but who nevertheless likes the same important things, cares for the same big things, and thinks about many deep things just as we think. Then we find a friend ; for we have found the sympathy that matters. You may call it like-mindedness for want of a better term ; but it should be called rather likeness of the set of char-

acter. One does not find it often ; one may go through life and never have the good fortune to find it at all.

But the one place where it is most likely to be found is the family. When we are young, we are chiefly conscious of the dissimilarities between ourselves and our brothers and sisters, in big things and in small. But as time passes, we usually discover that the dissimilarities are overshadowed by a deeper sameness, the result of heredity in part, and in part also of community of experience shared in infinite detail. And that is why one so often sees that the friendships which endure to the end of life are those which began in the squabbles of the nursery and developed in and through the bickerings of childhood.

But I have in mind even more the companionship which is the cause of the particularist family. Now husband and wife do not often come together as friends. The attraction is often superficial—if beauty is only skin-deep ; the man and the woman seldom know each other's deeper selves before they are bound together for life. A poor chance for companionship, you say ; the most we can hope for is that weak substitute for friendship which the Romans called *consuetudo*, or the condition of being ' used ' to some one. Small wonder that so many marriages are failures ; small wonder that the demand for divorce on easy terms grows daily stronger. But wise people will ask to see the other side of the picture : the countless thousands of marriages which lead on to the very finest form of companionship. And if we go on to ask how such a surprising result comes about, there is only one answer. It is not that people grow together by contiguity ; it is because from the very first they know that their union is permanent and indissoluble, and, building upon that very safe condition of necessity, they have the will to build on and up until they have made of their companionship a house for friendship. I am quite sure that few people realize how perilously near the surface is the longing for change—perhaps the most dangerous quality in human nature. Unless the door is fast bolted against *easy* change, we are lost. And we can always console ourselves by the knowledge that our longing for change can be satisfied—by changing the quality of our condition. That satisfaction is always open to those who are tied for life.

It is so easy, and so plausible, to talk (as many novelists do) of the hideousness of binding together people who jar upon each other, thwart each other, spoil each other's lives at every

turn. And the alternative—that only true spiritual unions shall be permanent—is so attractive, and so rotten. Without the sure knowledge, and perhaps the fear, of permanence, there would not be many spiritual unions. There would be a great many attempts to find one's soul-affinity; and a great many souls would be smirched in the process. And that is as far as we should get. Why not face the facts squarely? It is the glory of human love between the sexes that it is able to lead us on to true spiritual union. But at the first we fall in love because we are urged on by sex attraction and strong sex impulse, disguised and glorified by our vivid imagination at the moment. *Every* woman with whom a man falls in love becomes for him, at the time, his spiritual affinity. And if you think that the process of falling in love is the right and proper way of beginning the search for your soul's mate, then you will certainly fall in love afresh once a year or oftener, so long as sex attraction has any meaning for you. You craven! Take the affinity you have got, and be thankful that it is no worse. She is probably much too good for you; you yourself are probably the cause of any failure, and would make a tragedy of any union because you put self first.;

But the tragedy for the woman is very different, and generally very much greater. That men, endowed with all the male propensity to variety, should be firmly tied in marriage is, I think, a principle which hardly admits of doubt. But women have less hankering for change; moreover, they are far more at the mercy of chance in their choice of a mate, and a mistaken choice brings to them far severer penalties. I doubt whether any man can even imagine the agony suffered by a woman who finds herself tied for life to a satyr or a sot or (perhaps worst of all) a tyrant. Consequently, in spite of all that may be urged in favour of equal rights for both sexes, there are very deep reasons for allowing to women a much wider right to claim a dissolution of marriage than should be allowed to men.

The companionship or friendship of people one likes, outside the family or clan, raises much simpler questions. What conditions most surely provide the opportunity for friendship? Or rather, given the necessary modicum of likeableness in oneself, what conditions are needed to ensure congenial companionship? The answer is plain: work and interest—our first two conditions of the good—are also the conditions required here. There is only one kind of advice to give to friendless people:



go out and *do* something; interest yourself in something outside yourself. Here, too, women are the chief sufferers. Most men work, and find possible friends in the work. If strong interests are added, the result is certain. Even the play-interest may serve, though never so surely.

I said in an earlier section that freedom in the choice of work was not an essential condition, except within particular limits and for a particular reason. It is this: we must have enough freedom in the choice of our work to ensure that we mix with the type of people who are likely to satisfy us as companions. If society allotted to me the task of stable-boy in a racing stable, I might have no cause to grumble at the kind of work, but I should be unfairly treated in the choice of friends offered. They might be excellent men: but they would not be my sort. In fact, the drawback of all arbitrary assignment of tasks is not that it may set the philosopher to clean the streets (quite good for him, perhaps, if not for the streets), but that it may, and almost certainly will, force the philosopher to seek companionship in a very difficult circle. And that is a waste of happiness both for him and for them.

But, given the friendships, wherein do they most contribute to our happiness? Partly, no doubt, in the satisfaction of sentiment. A sure sympathizer, a confidant, and very occasionally a good counsellor—that is what I want my friend to be. Cicero loved Atticus chiefly because he could pour out his not very great soul to him almost daily, and feel sure of a kindly response. But Atticus, who was always responding, seems to have been the happier man as well as the finer friend. And of course in any companionship or partnership, the real gain is to the one who does most, gives most, and expects least. And the service which is of the essence of friendship and its chief cause of happiness, is also the chief maker and maintainer of friendship.

#### *IV. The Fourth Essential: An Ideal to Live For.*

It is not the fashion to-day to take the biggest things in life very seriously. Most of us busy and healthy people—suffering, as many of us do, from the pinch of prosperity—are apt to think that we can get on very comfortably without the pretence of idealism. The idealist is, in fact, something of a nuisance: he interferes with that flow of satisfactions which we are ready to accept as happiness. But the social philosopher is com-

pelled to insist that this fourth condition of the good cannot possibly be omitted ; for, unless our activities are connected by some thread of ideal purpose, it is difficult to see how our life can have much significance. Moreover, the continued pursuit of an end is really necessary to the happy life ; indeed, it is not without reason that many people associate happiness with the consciousness of *success*, that is, successful attainment of a chosen end. But, just as we found it necessary to use caution in accepting the 'creative element' as an essential factor of happiness, so we must be careful to define the kind of successful achievement necessary. First, the success must never be complete : in other words, the goal aimed at must never be quite attainable. This is not more paradoxical than the principle upon which it rests : that, in the matter of ideals, nothing fails like success. Both statements are true, simply because life is an endless 'becoming' ; and therefore it is not a cause of happiness but of great unhappiness to discover that the goal of one's life aim has been reached—and passed ; or to find (as more often happens) that it has changed and slipped away. Secondly, the end aimed at must be in harmony with the accepted *social* good : otherwise we cannot have that consciousness of harmony of purpose with reality which we found to be essential.

If these conditions are right, then we must not be too ready to adopt ends which are either quite practical or quite individual. It will not be enough, for instance, to follow the example of a well-known statesman who is said to have determined, in his undergraduate days, eventually to become Prime Minister and to win the Derby. We must not even be content with an unselfish or social end which will not outlast all normal changes. A rather tragic unhappiness often awaits the man who lives for his business or the woman who lives for her children. The chosen purpose in such cases has a sad tendency to walk away and leave us forlorn. We cannot, again, be satisfied with the unlimited and pious purpose of 'becoming good' by cultivating the wilderness of weeds which we call our character. True, a single lifetime will not exhaust the task ; but, by itself, it is too self-centred for the good citizen.

What then ? I suspect that the question is only difficult to answer because the only right answer is too simple and savours too much of copy-book morality. All idealism is apt to ring false in the ears of common sense. Hosts of happy, practical

people live contentedly from day to day without stopping to think about any ideal purpose. Why not? Why should we not be satisfied with the common round and the daily task, taking duty as it comes, and taking harmless enjoyment as it is offered? One reason only concerns us at present: it follows from the fact that we are members of a society. We cannot, if we will, escape the consciousness that we are part of a greater whole, which itself has a continuing purpose—call it progress, if you like. We cannot divorce ourselves from that purpose without discomfort; and we do in fact find that our happiness in the last resort depends upon our taking part of that purpose for our own. And in so far as you and I touch at all the happiness which endures, we find the reason lies in the fact that we have, in some degree, identified ourselves with our social group, or with a part of it, in such a way as to feel that its interest is also ours, and that our good is inseparable from its good. Also, that we are important factors in its good. But this need not be interpreted in too ideal a sense. In a really good society, no doubt, we should all find part of our happiness in the consciousness that our purposes in life were also the purposes of every one else. But in any society, we can at least feel so strong an attachment to the group with which we are closely and organically connected as to know that through all our efforts to make our own happiness by work and companionships and interests, there runs the effort to make their happiness also. And for that very reason we may be said to live for an ideal purpose, which is also the social purpose.

In detail, as we shall see later, the given social conditions will, to a great extent, determine our particular aims. In most practical matters, society is the divinity which shapes our ends; and the particular direction of purpose, and therefore the content of our particular ideals, are determined largely by the emphasis laid at different times upon the value of this or that mode of activity, this or that form of desire and appreciation. But this, as we shall also see, is not important, since it rests with our own wills to decide the *quality* of our ideals—the social intention upon which their validity depends.

*V. The Fifth Essential: Immunity from Severe Physical Hindrances, as well as from too great Care and Anxiety.*

This final condition begs many questions, I fear. But it is of course necessary to predicate at least a moderate standard of

capacity, and of freedom from compulsion and pressure of circumstances. It is open to any one to object that this is just the crux of the whole matter ; that we have no fair chance of happiness because society does not now allow us to be healthy or able or free. I will take up this issue later. For the present I only make the very moderate claim—and most people will grant it—that the majority of us are not really prevented from pursuing the good by ill-health or incapacity or even by excess of care and anxiety. That large groups, even in the most advanced societies, are excluded from this majority, I do not attempt to deny. The fault, and the remedies, are a part of my later theme.

A very large and important group of reformers may be inclined to cavil here. There seems to be no limit to the need of concentration upon the improvement of health and the conquest of disease. In a world in which half the most obvious misery comes from the unconquered advance of disease and mental deficiency, from feeble heredity, and from general neglect of sanity of body and mind, it seems reasonable to hold up health as the good most greatly to be desired. I have no intention of belittling health. But there seems to be no clear reason for including it as an element of the good other than as a necessary condition of attainment ; and the definition of that condition will be considered later, together with the question of the possible means of securing it. I confess, however, that I am too much a Platonist not to believe that good health depends in great measure upon the purging of our life of complexities ; and that all the efforts of all the specialists in the world will not succeed in reducing very greatly the ill-health of human beings who try to live in an environment wilfully complicated far beyond the point at which it is manageable.

But it is in relation to activity that the importance of physical fitness stands out most clearly. For we must remember that from our definition of happiness it follows that activity is an essential element,—activity directed to fulfilment of purpose. Put simply, this means that we must be workers, and that we must have an aim in life to which our daily work in part, and our general activities of mind and body in even greater degree, are related. Obviously then we must have enough health and fitness to allow this work and activity. But here again we cannot say what this positively involves. When we consider the activity of the blinded Henry Fawcett, or the purposeful



activities of more recent examples of grave limitation, such as W. E. Henley or Sir Jesse Boot, we feel rather ashamed to make much of our own or our neighbours' disabilities. We know, alas! that every society contains many members who are debarred by physical defects from attaining by themselves the happiness in which work-activity is a necessary element. In every society, therefore, one of the most crying needs is a concentration of care, sympathy and co-operation for the express purpose of making these real unfortunates feel their worth and the worth of whatever efforts they can make. But this does *not* mean that we must refuse to consider the possibility of general happiness until physical unfitness has been eliminated, nor even that we must put the pursuit of health in the forefront of the ends which together constitute happiness.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE CITIZEN AND HIS SOCIETY

WE have defined our modest goal of the good, and we see that the conditions, though not yet secured for all, are within the reach of most of us. Why then are we not happy? Does the blame rest on us, or on society? And if the latter, is the natural evolution of society—its progressive movement or development—at fault? Or is the trouble to be found in special mistakes or neglects in our management of social life, which this or that reform might cure? I will take these questions in order, beginning with the analysis of ourselves. This is the logical point of departure; for, whether the individual is prior to society or not, he is assuredly the cause of society's existence, and the agent of all its activities.

It is sometimes said that one cannot safely generalize about human nature. But most of our social action proceeds upon the assumption that there is a known and knowable sameness of human nature, which extends far beyond the point at which psychology leaves us, with its account of our given equipment of mental powers and forces. In the superstructure of desires, interests and aims which thought builds upon this given foundation, it is still true that there is more than one touch of nature which makes us all kin; and the common elements are both good and bad. The danger lies in our partial generalizations: we over-emphasize either the good or the bad at the expense of the other. This may be illustrated by a generalization which has been fashionable since the time of Aristotle, namely that man is a social animal. This is true and safe only so long as we remember that man is also an anti-social animal. We are all so anxious to be optimists that we fasten upon the good side and forget the bad. From the former generalization we deduce the conception of society as a system of co-operations, of reciprocities, of mutual interchange of services. But we forget that society is just as truly a system of antagonisms, of competing animosities, and of incessant clash of interests. So

common is this mistake that I am impelled to present first the anti-social nature of human beings, and to show its inevitable effect upon social relations.

The anti-social element in all of us is sometimes called self-assertion, or the assertion of the claims of self against the claims of others. Perhaps a better name for it is the theological term, original sin. We are all kin by virtue of our possession of persistent desire for satisfactions which are not real but misleading, not good but always and at their best 'roaming midway between the good and the not-good'. I do not mean merely that all our desired satisfactions are transitory : that is the character of most human happiness. I mean that they are invariably associated with the narrow, personal, separate self, which is the subject to be satisfied. In other words, our desires bind us down to the 'sin of self'—the quite necessary 'sin' of the strenuous, pushing, social being. It may seem far-fetched to call it sin, when the satisfaction desired is often quite harmless or even socially useful. But its fixed connexion with the desiring self which is to be satisfied introduces the element of separateness, which in turn involves disunity or disharmony with and antagonism to the general good. This even at its very best. Normally the satisfactions which we all seek are very patently opposed to the good. They need not be vicious or lustful or greedy, though I am sure that strong traces of greed tinge many of the desires which we would gratify if we could. But they sin against the common good in subtler ways. First, they are always expanding from a little to much, and from much to more ; and the harmlessness of 'a little' soon becomes the personal and social danger of 'much'. There is no need to labour this point in the case of any individual who lets *any* desire grow until it becomes an absorption. The social danger concerns us more closely. And for society, the menace of expanding desire is that it leads at once to competition for satisfactions which are limited ; and therefore leads to an ultimately anti-social grasping of satisfactions which we all need in some degree, and which all cannot enjoy if some few possess them in excess.

This matter is really very simple. To desire a house is to desire a most harmless satisfaction. To desire a good house is certainly not harmful. But if you expand your conception of this good a step or two farther, until you desire a very fine house or an imposing house, your desire has become competitive

and cannot be satisfied (in the present state of the world) without lessening the harmless satisfaction of others in the matter of houses. So, and more obviously, to desire food and desire it healthily is no bad thing. But elaborate the desire until you dream of Lucullus feasts, and you easily see the anti-social element in the desire. And this is true of all desires which need some expenditure of wealth and work to satisfy them—in spite of the protestations of rich people, and the pious sophistries of their satellites, the traders who increase their gains by ministering to their satisfactions; in spite also of the frequent approbation of the stupid multitudes who would follow the bad example if they could.

In this way the natural expansion of desire along any line is apt to force us into competition with the desires of others, and so far acts as an antagonizing influence in our social life. But the desire for satisfaction expands, not in one direction only, but in any direction in which the way is open. Desire for manifold satisfactions is the mark of a progressive human being; and his capacity for the manifold is quite unlimited. Only one thing is needed: the suggestion that a new satisfaction is now a possibility. For desire follows this universal rule: it becomes active as an impelling force only when and so far as its potential gratification is brought within our possible reach. No one seriously desired to fly until the invention of a compact, internal-combustion engine made the flying machine at least a possibility. No one really desired to be carried along at thirty or sixty miles an hour until James Watt invented the reciprocating steam-engine. No poor man actively desired a motor-car of his own until Henry Ford's ingenuity brought the auto within every artisan's reach. But once let the suggestion of practicability take root, and few of us will stop until we have done our utmost to push the new desire to its fulfillment.

We see then that desire is naturally prone to rapid expansion along any one line, and rapid diversification along many lines; and this without any definable limit. Herein lie at once the merit and the demerit of desire. Desire—effort—satisfaction: that is the universal process of life. Expanding desire—increasing effort—new satisfaction: that is the universal process of what we call progressive life. It is desire, not love, which makes the world go round. And it brings us progress, not only in the form of ever-growing stores of material goods, but



by forcing upon us all a higher standard—not indeed of life, but of the requirements of life and therefore of the need of effort.

But this same desire militates against our welfare in a double way. On the one hand, the continual expansion of more imperious wants brings fiercer competition for the means of satisfaction, permeating *all* the units of advanced societies, and fast spreading to all the units of the human race. And each increase of this competition is antagonistic to social peace. On the other hand, expanding desire clogs the wheels of progress with refuse and lumber. The means of satisfaction which our efforts devise are becoming both a hindrance and a menace. They get in the way of life. Many rich people to-day are like children, possessed of so many playthings that they cannot enjoy any of them. Poorer people are so eager to reach the same unenviable condition that they have little time to think of living. Pursuit has taken the place of life. The pity of it is that we are pursuing phantoms, means of satisfaction which do not satisfy. And the activities involved in the pursuit, and even the activities involved in the use of the satisfactions when gained, are fast passing beyond our control.

I have resisted the temptation to take a short cut to the demonstration of the dangers of desire by connecting them with the universal love of money, which we have authority for calling the root of all evil. That doctrine is out of fashion ; or else good people no longer allow their withers to be wrung by it. It is not uncommon to hear very honest people deride the accusation that they are continually animated by the desire for money. I have heard a hall-full of extraordinarily worthy (and very well-to-do) people proclaim with pleasing unanimity that it was mere perversity to suppose that they cared for money at all. But this is just a confusing of the means with the end. If we desire anything that money must buy, we desire the money to buy it with. If you desire food and clothing for your children and medicine for your sick wife, you desire money—since without money you can hardly move a step towards providing the desired things. No one but an eremite can claim freedom from this desire. But it is as a means to other satisfactions that we desire it. Only misers desire money as an end, or a good in itself ; and they succeed in doing so only by a rare process of self-delusion. They concentrate their attention so completely upon the means that they forget the ends alto-

gether ; and their desire for *any* end becomes atrophied. We may safely go a step farther and say that almost all of us desire more money than we have got. The desire to be better off is not only general but is held to be laudable. Even the most contented of us find that the desire for something not yet possessed is both common and rather urgent. In rare moments of moral exaltation I have persuaded myself that I want nothing more. But the moods are short-lived ; in a very few minutes I find myself wanting urgently something which I cannot afford to buy—even if it is only so innocent a thing as a new book. Let us be honest, then, and say at once that we desire money very keenly—and plenty of it.

We are thus driven to a conclusion which is not comforting. As 'progress' increases, as our power and ingenuity devise more and newer contrivances of satisfaction, our anti-social force grows too. When riches increase, we set our hearts upon them increasingly : we cannot help it. Each addition to the possible equipment of a full life adds something to the strength of that core of anti-social impulse within us—the self-assertion which all strong desire drives us to. The problem of peace on earth is becoming more and more difficult ; we cannot understand why—after nineteen centuries of Christianity. But there is nothing puzzling about it. The progressive world *asks* for strife ; almost compels it. No system of tribunals, no conciliation courts, no Geneva conventions can prevent the clash of self-assertions growing ever more vigorous and more clamant. We do not like to admit it ; but we shall soon be forced to admit that our very 'progress' in material things is itself an anti-social force. It feeds desire beyond its safety point. Bearing in mind the principle that desire becomes strong only when the possibility of satisfaction is envisaged as a near possibility, we see that every new convenience, every new comfort, every new instrument of enjoyment, every new toy, produces a corresponding urgency of desire which is imperious in all of us if the new satisfaction is held up as something which we ought to have and might have. We say that discontent grows : this is more than discontent. What is growing is the pushing, self-centred determination to have and enjoy each new thing if others have it. Why not ? We are as good as they are. And at once the competing units are in motion, *not* to gain a common end, but to gain each for himself a separate end. In this way the competition for self-satisfactions

tends to become the dominant note of every society ; and when the dissatisfied units join themselves into groups—bound by community of dissatisfaction—competition between the groups grows more bitter. It is inevitable : it is the dire price to be paid for a ' progress ' which is not real.

Yet the fault is not really in the progress ; it is in our reaction to it. The progress cannot be stayed : we love it too much. The only hope is that the equally rapid growth of our self-assertion may somehow be restrained. Let us therefore turn to the restraining influences which are resident in the nature of you and me—the social qualities of the individual which curb and counteract the anti-social tendency of his self-centred desires.

Man is a social animal, as well as an anti-social one. That means that he is inclined to like his kind, wishes to live in amity with his fellows, is made unhappy by separation and isolation. Fortunately this is incontrovertible. There is some good in the worst of us, and perhaps that good may best be interpreted as the germ of the desire for harmony, for union with the good in others, for union even with the good everywhere. But at the risk of being called a pessimist, I must at once point out that, whereas the antagonizing force, being negative, has no boundaries and no limits, the positive desire for union works within the very narrow limits of certain human contacts. I mean this : as a competitor asserting my claim to satisfaction, I am in competition with every other claimant everywhere, whether known or unknown. But as a lover of my kind, I am not really operative outside a small circle. I stand up for myself against all humanity all the time. I also put others before myself—but only some others, sometimes ; never all others, unless I am a saint ; never normally more than a very few others, whom I single out to be the beneficiaries of my sacrifice.

I want to avoid the fallacy of phrases here ; it is useless to blind ourselves by an illusion. Many good people are fond of holding up a new motive as the possible saviour of society. They call it brotherhood or international fellowship or the love of humanity. Now none of these things has or can have any existence as a reality ; they exist in the imagination as ideals which may come within our range when we men become as gods. Human capacity for love is as limited as is the capacity to express that love. It is possible—though extraordinarily

difficult—to love one's neighbour—any neighbour—in the concrete, however unattractive he or she may be. It is possible also to feel a strong sentiment of charitable tolerance for all the human beings on this globe, including niggers, yellow men, anarchists and Bolsheviks. But we do not love them ; and we have no intention of accepting them as brothers unless they change radically.

This sentiment of toleration has probably grown in strength as well as in range during the last century and a half, and is growing even more rapidly to-day. It is the effect—as it is the obvious prerequisite,—of vast aggregates of people living peaceably together in close contact, and continually increasing the number of points of contact in their daily lives. The sentiment is partly self-regarding : unless I tolerate you, you will not tolerate me. It is partly extra-regarding : I really wish you well, I want to help you somewhere in your life, I like to think that you have the same freedom to do and to enjoy that I have. On the growth of this sentiment—an honest ' live and let live ' impulse—depends most of our social good. But it is not a simple matter. On the one hand, there is the fellow-feeling which makes toleration and even willing co-operation natural and easy. We feel kinship with an ever widening circle ; and we *want* to feel that others are like us and that we are like them. On the other hand, the desire for individuality grows too ; a desire for separate distinction and distinctiveness, for uniqueness even ; the desire to be different from all others, and, in our own estimate, superior in something because of that difference. Hence a perpetual contradiction, which may be exemplified by a very common experience. When we mix with people of our own kind, we are acutely unhappy if we are not dressed like them ; but we are still more unhappy if we find we are dressed exactly like any one of them. We desire at once sameness in general and difference in particular. And this contradiction runs through most of our social equipment and activities. It is probably the chief explanation of some rather baffling social phenomena. People all over the world are drawing together in ever greater groups, with common policies, common aims, common activities and interests. But within those groups the component lesser groups continue to stand out and to insist upon emphasizing their difference from the whole in new ways. Half forgotten languages are revived and sedulously cultivated ; old distinguishing customs are brought



to light and given new life ; all the little groups struggle to assert their uniqueness, at the very same time that they are moulding themselves into parts of the greater whole.

Europe supplies many examples of this ; America no less. A few years ago it was the fashion to regard America as a vast melting pot of different nationalities. The shrewdest observers now warn us that it is not really a melting pot at all, and perhaps never will be. The elements will not fuse together ; they become parts of a more or less united whole, but they remain separate parts, and their separateness increases even while their union with the whole becomes more compact.

There is nothing ominous in this. The same phenomenon appears in every united family as it grows up. Its unity changes, becoming more voluntary and more plastic, but deeper and more durable because its foundations of profound sameness are better understood. But each member moves on separately in the development of his or her own life as a purposeful individual who refuses to be subordinated to any group mould, however dear. And the process is of course really progressive, and only dangerous when jealousy or envy or any cause of enmity creeps in and breaks the unity of the family mould.

We may accept the sentiment of toleration as a real foundation for social advance. But it is beset by dangers from other sentiments which possibly grow with its growth. As contact increases, and as nearer approach is made to similarity of opportunity, there grows up a new resentment against any enforced inferiority. So long as an aristocracy is separated by a great gulf from an ignorant peasantry, that aristocracy can, with safety, enjoy very great extravagances, usually at the expense of the masses. Worms do not turn if they are kept in their proper place—below ground. So too a plutocracy can live very riotously so long as the lower orders are really below the level of close observation and possible imitation. To the old-fashioned labourers the extravagances of the young squire seemed right and proper for him ; there was no envy or ill-will, seldom a hint of criticism. But as the mass of society becomes more fluid, as the contact of each with each grows closer and more varied, as equality takes its place among the social deities, the old safety disappears. The worker tramping home from his work sees, envies and resents the ease of the motorists driving out to their evening's enjoyment. The labourer in the

fields reckons up the cost of his employer's extravagances (if there are any nowadays for the land-owner or farmer!) and compares it discontentedly with his own weekly wage. Each of us is now an exemplar to more people than we dream of; each is, in a sort, an ambassador of his class wherever he goes. Discontent grows largely because the rich are such very undiplomatic ambassadors; they will realize too late that display of luxury is one of the great causes of the Socialism which they deplore.

Here then is the individual unit of society, in plain and simple dress. A tolerant and friendly being, anxious to like his fellows, very anxious to be liked by them, really loving three or four people and capable of real sacrifice for them—and even on occasion for many others;—preferring peace to strife; feeling a vague but not unreal goodwill for all; but very self-assertive also, impelled in all his keenest activities by strong desire for satisfaction for himself and his very tiny circle of closest contact; at the mercy of an endless growth of that desire, in intensity and in range; forced to obey the beck and call of an environment which does not merely suggest but also compels the hot pursuit of new satisfactions; always pushing against his fellows in the pursuit, finding them in his way, apt to feel a new dislike for them because they are in his way; himself a veritable cockpit of the strife between the claims of self and the claims of others, with the scales tending just now to be weighted in favour of the claims of self by the increasing suggestions of an incredibly progressive age; becoming year by year more capable of pursuit and enjoyment, more intelligent certainly in devising means of obtaining the enjoyment; more energetic too, and in the world's sense, more progressive and more civilized. That is the individual—you or I—who is the unit of society. Our souls are the arena in which the social struggle is for ever going on; from our souls issue the forces of co-operation and of competition, of harmony or of disharmony, which make or mar our social life.

But what of the social forces—those movements and influences in whose grip we are but straws, pushed and pulled in directions beyond our control? What is the nature of this Society, so infinitely greater than you or I? Is it a Being in whose existence we are merged, as molecules are merged in a huge organism? Has it a mind, of which our little minds are but the very fragmentary reflections? I confess that I have

harboured both these notions for many years ; but I have been driven to discard them both, as being at once unnecessary and dangerous.

I do not think that Auguste Comte would ever have called humanity the ' Great Being ' had he not felt the urgent need of finding a substitute for the God whom he had discarded as a figment belonging to the theological or metaphysical stages of thought.

But his own invention had even more metaphysical iniquity about it than that of the theologians—and much less practical value.

There may be some gain in speaking of a nation or any more or less distinct group as a ' being ' ; at least it has some unity in action. There is no gain—even of convenience—in speaking about humanity as anything whatever. If we mean the human species, past, present and to come, let us say so ; remembering always that there are very many queer sub-species in it, which we need to keep distinct if our thought is to be accurate. We may speak, rather inaccurately, of the evolution of this species ; but we really mean the development of mankind—a simpler as well as a more correct expression.

I also find it difficult to believe that the social psychologists would ever seriously have predicated mind of society, had they not felt the urgent need of finding a basis for their science corresponding to the individual mind which is the sure basis of individual psychology. They justify their assumption of a ' social mind ' by pointing out that, whatever definition you frame of the individual mind, you are compelled to admit that it also applies to the mind of society. If so, one can only retort—so much the worse for your definition of the individual mind. For if there is one element which is essential as a mark of my mind or yours, it is to be found in the fact that all its feelings, thoughts and purposes are bound together and made significant by the personality which owns, controls, creates and guides them ; and no such personality exists in any society. But this matter is too important to be dismissed by a casual criticism.

There are two very different things to be considered here : first the mind or thought system of society ; secondly, the mentality of crowds.

1. On the reality of a mind-system belonging to society is based the theory that society has a mind or soul. This system

may be regarded as the entire system of knowledge, law, custom and institution which exists in or for a society. It is real ; it is far greater than any individual thought system ; it is independent of any particular individual minds ; it determines the general lines of behaviour for all ; and it gives to all individual minds the greater part of their content. You will notice at once that this is also true of any and every department of knowledge, law, etc.—of mathematical knowledge, for example, or of the English language, in relation to any single mind. But what does it mean ? Plainly, it means that there exists a heritage of knowledge, of laws, of institutions, of customs, possessed by us jointly and shared by us partially, by some more and by some less. But this heritage, systematized and organized as it may be, has no existence whatever except in the living minds of the individuals who share it, and in sundry dead records. *It* has no life and no purpose ; *it* is not itself a mind. Yet society wills and acts as one, you will say ? No ; emphatically not so ; that is wholly and entirely a convenient fiction, a mere manner of speaking, and nothing more. *Nothing* wills or acts except the minds of living individuals : social action is never more than this ; the full explanation of social action needs the introduction of no other factor. But I hasten to add that whenever any minds act in concert, a new element comes in. Wherever two or three are gathered together, there is the effect of association in the midst of them. And this effect of association is of two kinds (always closely connected) ; the effect of all joint thought or combined concentration of thought upon a given subject ; and the effect of all joint feeling or combined concentration of feeling upon a given subject. Both effects are increased or modified by actual contiguity ; but they are also manifested without contiguity. Both effects are manifested as an enlargement or quickening of the individual thought or feeling. When a number of people are thinking about the same problem, and know it, and are so far in communication that each learns quickly the stage reached by the others, the thoughts of all are stimulated, raised to a slightly higher power, and a conclusion may be reached which would perhaps not have been reached by any one individual mind. If the issue is a matter of joint action, then sentiment and impulse (which are of course the dominant factors in most practical joint decisions, at any rate of large groups) are similarly quickened and modified ; and again the action determined



upon is or may be different from that which any one individual mind would have chosen.

What is implied in this ? Does it imply anything more than the fact that there is such a thing as action of mind upon mind : that all association creates, as it were, a special medium in which our minds function a little differently from the manner in which they function in isolation ? Whether this involves us in the admission of some sort of group mind or soul can best be decided by taking the extremest instance of it—the mentality of a crowd.

2. A crowd of human beings is not the same thing as a number of human beings in an aggregate. It is not quite human : at any rate, it is not quite sane or rational. Every member of it is changed ; he is not quite himself ; he becomes for the time a different being—a blend of the sub-human and the superman, with the sub-human strongly predominating. A crowd is capable of strange doings : occasionally exalted above the normal level of behaviour of any of its members, more often degraded below that level. It is usual to speak of the contagion of a crowd ; the term is not inept, for there are present the marks of infection of feeling running like a quick poison through all the individual minds. The results are sometimes terrible ; they are never wholly sane. What is the inference to be drawn ? That every crowd has a ' soul ', a very temporary affair, no doubt, but real while it lasts ? We must go a little farther back to get a clear answer.

First, the phenomenon is not confined to human beings. Gregarious animals in a crowd display just the same symptoms. A herd of peaceable and well-conducted cows will also, on occasion, show all the symptoms of mob-madness, ranging from bravery far above the individual cow-nature to savagery towards a well-known friend impossible to any individual cow in its senses.

Secondly, *every* close contact—even in the very simplest form of two people meeting together casually—produces a slight exaltation of feeling and behaviour, unless the contact is so familiar as to have lost its effect, just as tobacco loses much of its effect if one smokes very frequently. Contact with my family leaves me cold ; but a meeting with an acquaintance or a stranger alters me for the moment, sometimes very slightly, sometimes quite uncomfortably. I am not quite ' I ' while the interview lasts : I may even say much more than I mean to

say. In some circumstances a crowd of two people has a very marked effect upon each. A meeting between a man and a maid may quickly generate an exaltation of feeling which may lead them no farther than a harmless attempt to pose as much finer people than they know themselves to be, or may carry them into the madness of falling in love. A meeting of a dull committee or a Parish Council is always marked by some traces of abnormal sentiment or decision; and in a political meeting, no one at all (one hopes) is ever quite his real sane self.

Now a mob is a kind of political meeting without a chairman, and with a programme before it simplified down, usually, to a single issue. The contact throughout the mass is very close; the concentration of sentiment upon a single point is very strong; and the result is a kind of madness.

In each case, something is generated by contiguity which infects the minds of all individuals concerned. What is it? Clearly there is only one conclusion open: social contact produces a sort of polarization of minds, which is greater or less according as sentiment is or is not predominant, and reflective thought is or is not in abeyance. In some cases the effect is merely a quickening of the individual mind, a focusing of its energy upon one point. In other cases, the effect is a complete reversal of the normal 'set' of the individual mind—an altogether disastrous destruction of balance or poise. It is harder to say what causes this polarization; but it may be suggested that the influence of the sub-conscious mind probably extends farther than we know, and is capable of affecting people beyond the limits of actual contact.

This brief consideration of crowd-mentality leads us on to this general conclusion: that all association of like-minded individuals has a definite effect upon the individual mind, which in turn may be caused by some unknown action of our sub-consciousness. This phenomenon is no more wonderful—and no less—than the phenomena connected with the attractions and repulsions of molecules of the same order. It is a fixed condition of our life: we are all members one of another in the sense that we are all influencing one another all the time. And social life is, as it were, the medium in which the eternal action and re-action take place. It is, in fact, first and chiefly, the medium of minds in which each individual mind has its being. Each of us is in contact with that medium at a million

points, all the time. Each of us is drawing from it and giving to it in every action and perhaps in every thought. Each of us owes to it an infinite debt—both for good and for evil; a far bigger debt than to the physical environment, though our physical life depends upon that. Each of us has incumbent upon him the duty of doing what he can to improve the quality of that medium, by act and thought and will. It acts upon us and we re-act to it in countless ways; and the commonest or most obvious or most important of those ways can perhaps be classified and in part explained under such convenient headings as suggestion, imitation, opposition, and so on. That is the province of social psychology, which thus needs no assumption of a separate great Mind to give it validity.

I, as an individual, am in contact with this mind-medium in different degrees of closeness or intimacy. Part of it is as intimate for me as my own house or study; so intimate, indeed, that I often think of it as a part of myself. Other parts are intimate for a time, and then lose their close relation. Some of my friends, alas! are of this order. Other parts again have only a specialized and narrow range of contact; some groups to which I belong only see me at rare intervals, and only touch me closely at these moments. And the contact widens out until it reaches its thinnest and least significant point in all those casual meetings and occasional interchange of civilities which I experience in any part of the world.

It is in my power to modify most of these degrees of contact. I can escape from the most intimate (with an effort) just as I can escape from my house and study and garden. I can cease to be a living member of any circle—except the vague and limitless circle of humanity. Or I can change my circle of contact altogether, leaving my country and becoming the citizen of a different nation.

Now not one of these groups has any reality except as the environing medium in which I and others live. *We* are real; and the medium which we create for each other is real too—but not with any independent or organic reality. It is no more a living 'being', capable of possessing a mind, than is the air we breathe. This is clear enough in the case of the crowd: you would no more say a crowd has a mind or soul than you would say the poisonous atmosphere of a crowded tap-room has one. And this is equally true of every form of social group, whatever degree of relative permanence it may have attained. *All* the

phenomena of social contact, however close or vague it may be, however large or small the circle, can be better understood and explained without reference to any social mind—with one apparent exception. It is this : the movements of any society unified enough to be called a nation—its changes of feeling and purpose in little things and big—are often so irrational as to appear most like the impulsive reactions of some great being, at a low level of intelligence, to its environment. It may be hard to think of a nation as an organized group of reasonable people, in spite of all the thought-force expended in political discussion. But we have to think of it as some sort of being in action. It *does* things ; it does them rather blindly, but it does them as a single being. Does it not herein appear to have some sort of mind—differing perhaps from our thinking intelligences, but still a mind ? This question of the reality of a national mind is so important that I must examine it in some detail, even at the risk of a little repetition.

We have long been familiar with the conception of a Mob Mind. We could forgive the assumption, and the exaggerated use made of the conception, by such writers as Sighele and Le Bon, partly because their speculations were always interesting, even if a trifle wild, and partly because their assumption did not lead us into any very serious difficulties nor commit us to a dangerous philosophy. All of us, too, have talked about the spirit or soul of a people, finding the phrase useful to express the characteristics of a group living and acting in close association under the influence of accepted tradition, law and custom. But the whole position is changed when we find scientific psychologists gravely insisting upon the reality of a social ' Mind ' or minds as veritable entities, dominating the far lesser minds of us individuals. For this commits us to a philosophy of life which, as we shall see, destroys the reality of the individual.

The argument is simple. The individual mind is an organized system of mental forces : that is the definition of it. But the organized social group which we call the nation is also an organized system of mental forces—the more so in proportion to the degree of its organization. Therefore it *is* a mind : it ' thinks and wills and feels and acts '. It ' has a life of its own, tendencies of its own . . . and a power of perpetuating itself as a self-identical system '. We are further justified in assuming its existence because the assumption is convenient :



'the conception of a group mind is useful, and therefore valid'.<sup>1</sup>

Now the psychologist's definition of the individual mind as a system of mental forces may be excellent within its legitimate limits. I have no right to object if his meaning is just this:— 'This is how I define my subject matter when I set out to examine mind as a scientific psychologist.' But if he means more than this, if he asserts that his definition really defines the individual human mind—'the mind which is the man'—then I must reply that he is surely trifling with us. The significant individual, that which 'thinks and wills and acts and feels'—and also loves and hates and sins and repents and falls down into hell or struggles upwards towards an ideal—this significant individual mind is rather more than a 'system of mental forces'. It is indeed such a system, but organized and focused and used and owned by an individual consciousness, possessing memory and purpose, whose existence gives significance and reality to the system as a human mind. And not one of us—neither you nor I nor the psychologist himself when he is outside his study, is in the least disturbed by being told that this unity of consciousness cannot be proved, and that this unity is occasionally upset by some accident to brain or nerves. This is simply to assert—and no one can very seriously deny it—that the significance of mind lies in the fact that it is my mind or your mind, unified by the persistent consciousness of self. If the psychologist still insists that his definition is complete, then I retort that he has not realized the consequences. For it is obvious that there is no longer any meaning in will and religion and morals; if organized systems of mental forces can worship God or dream of ideals, they can do so only as the result of the compulsion of other systems of forces external to them; and before we can even say this, we must first personify them.

But I am told that I must not use the argument about the unity of individual consciousness, because I cannot say where-in it inheres, and because it is sometimes split up or disintegrated. Then by what right does the psychologist himself speak of self-consciousness—and speak of it too as the most

<sup>1</sup> The quotations are taken from Dr. W. McDougall's *Social Psychology*; and the argument which follows is aimed specially against the conception of a Social Mind as propounded by Dr. McDougall, who may be regarded as a leading champion of this conception.

important reality? If he forbids us to bring it in to explain the significance of the individual mind, how does he dare to bring it in again and again to explain the significance of the 'social mind'? I confess I am too stupid to understand the logic of a scientist who rules out any reference to the unity of the individual consciousness, and then goes on to assume the reality of the self-consciousness of the social group, which, by his own admission, has no existence anywhere except in the consciousness of its individual members.

Having made his definition of mind, the social psychologist goes on to point out that every recognized social group must also be regarded as a similar organized system of mental and purposive forces. For you cannot really describe the organization of such a group except in terms of mind; its essence is that it consists of mind stuff and mental forces and relations which are of course mental; and these forces and relations are organized into a system, which is not confined within the mind of any individual. Every organized social aggregate thus has a collective mental life which is not merely the sum of the mental lives of its units; and therefore it has a collective mind or a collective soul. In this way Mind is posited of the organized social group—essentially the same as the mind of the individual, only far greater and more powerful.

Now here there is no question of the legitimacy of sufficiency of a definition; we are given a definite assertion: every organized social group either is or possesses a mind of its own, just as every normal individual is or possesses a mind of his own. And immediately we are plunged into bewilderment. For, though the psychologist really does admit the reality of individual self-consciousness (even if he can neither explain it nor grasp its significance), he is honest enough to confess that the social mind has no self-consciousness. Still, it is a mind; and he does in fact go on to talk much about its self-consciousness, thereby illustrating very well the dangers of his conception. He does not really mean that there is any such thing; he only means that the individual members of the group are more or less conscious of the group and what the group stands for. This he admits quite explicitly; yet he continues to talk about a nation's consciousness of itself, and even about the growth of a European self-consciousness!

This is only one among many difficulties. More serious complexities arise when one tries to get clear the relation of one

group mind to another. The social psychologist sees that it is rather awkward to have minds within minds, and minds overlapping minds. So he bravely attempts to confine his social mind to the organized nation (which is itself indefinable except as a group which chooses to consider itself a nation, and is permitted to do so), and he denies it to other groups—or rather, since he cannot deny it, gives us to understand that the lesser groups are not quite fully qualified to be ranked as possessors of minds,—though apparently a collection of the highly-favoured nation-groups may also possess a mind, if the talk of a ‘European self-consciousness’ means anything at all. But the difficulties are not escaped. The nation-group does not differ in kind from other organized groups; it is only larger than most (though not larger than all others); its organization is perhaps more complex than any other; at the same time it is, as a group, less definite than most, and far harder to define. McDougall rejects the definition which many wise people have found themselves reduced to, namely that the nation is any large group whose members choose to consider themselves a nation, and are allowed so to assert themselves. But his own definition does not help us. He is obviously obliged to define that group of which he chiefly predicates Mind and Character; he actually does so by defining the nation as ‘a people possessed of some degree of political independence, and possessed of a national mind and character’! This delightful *argumentum in circulo* is fortified (as indeed it needs to be) by other statements. Thus we are told that the nation is the most highly organized of all social groups, and also that ‘the nation alone is a self-contained and complete organism’. This last statement is palpably false. No social group is an organism at all; and no accurate thinker would use such language about it except as a metaphor which is occasionally useful and always dangerous. Social groups are *organizations*—and that is a very different thing. Further, it is almost certainly untrue that any nation is as highly organized as, let us say, the Roman Catholic Church. Putting aside all mystical conceptions of the latter, we must still admit that it is one of the most marvellously organized systems of mental forces in the world, possessing a unity greater than that of most nations, and commanding a loyalty far exceeding the loyalty enjoyed by most nations. It has endured as a unified organization many times longer than the great American nation; and membership of

it has more significance, more content, than the membership of any nation on the earth. It is also far more definite and easy to define, because of this fuller content of the membership of it. It has also a history, tradition and prestige second to those of no nation ; it has its own code of laws of conduct and its own definite faith, covering a wider field than the laws of any nation ; and it is the object of a passionate devotion which, in theory always and in practice often, over-rides the devotion of the citizen to his nation. Very certainly, then, if the Mind of a nation is a reality, the Mind of the Roman Catholic Church is a reality, too. But if so, how is it related to the national Mind ? We have now two great Minds, whose very different ' character ' and ' consciousness ' belong to or reside in or are manifested by millions of the same individuals in some countries, with millions of other individuals participating in the one or in the other but not in both. Is this really a conceivable condition ?

This is one example of a very awkward overlapping of two great ' minds '. Examples of minds wholly contained within other minds also meet one everywhere ; for if every organized social group implies, as it does, an organized mental system which is not identical with any individual mind system, then every big and little organized group within every nation has a mind. How are these related ? Or, more pointedly, whatever is meant by two or more great overlapping minds containing within them an indefinite number of lesser minds ? Does it mean anything at all ? We are not vouchsafed any answer, except this. The social psychologist gravely informs us that ' this difficulty ' (namely the difficulty of the overlapping and intersection of group-minds and the definition of each) ' arises only in connexion with the lower forms of group-life ' ; and he quotes the parallel difficulty of defining the unity of a sponge ! Is this seriously put forward as the correct analogy for the organized unity of the Roman Catholic Church ?

But the real objection to the psychologist's position lies, not in any difficulties or inconsistencies involved in it, but in the logical consequences which flow from it as a whole. These I will explain in a moment. But first let me make clear the alternative which I suggest for the conception of a real social ' mind '.

I heartily agree that society must be regarded first and last as a society of *minds*. (I would prefer to say ' souls ' ; but let



that pass.) And, as citizens of society, we live and move and have our being in the social environment, which is best called an environment of minds and mind stuff. This environment includes much more than the living minds about us. The minds of our predecessors have left records of their experience, which are known to us as history and tradition and rules of behaviour and accumulations of knowledge. The history and tradition and rules form the special heritage of particular groups ; the religious and national groups are the largest and most important of these ; but all groups have their heritage in greater or less degree—even down to a College Debating Society.

The heritage may be called a constant mental force, or system of mental forces ; for it is not only known in part to all individuals, but is also *felt*, in the sense that the knowledge is accompanied by sentiment.

It exists—as knowledge—in records and in the mental content of living minds ; it exists as a force, just so far as individuals think and feel about it ; it exists as a latent force, both in records and in living minds. But it has no other existence whatever.

It is greater than any one citizen's mind, just as every system of knowledge is greater than any one student's mind.

Our knowledge of and our feeling about this heritage modify our behaviour at every turn. We have also seen that joint knowledge and joint feeling (in the sense of two or more people thinking or feeling about the same thing) may produce effects which are different from the effects produced by separate, individual knowing and feeling. It is therefore true that one cannot deduce or explain social behaviour without constant reference to the social heritage, and to the influence of joint thought and joint feeling. (To talk of any behaviour as a 'sum' of the actions of separate individuals is of course absurd.)

Further, another kind of knowledge and feeling affects our behaviour. We cannot be members of a group without some thought and feeling concerning the group itself and our membership of it. This thought and this feeling combine with our knowledge and feeling about the group-heritage to influence our behaviour in greater or less degree.

Thirdly, as members of a group, we are related to other members, and are conscious of the relationship ; and this involves some degree of kinship, of fraternity, and often of combined

activity with more or less social propinquity. This consciousness also influences our behaviour in subtle ways.

Fourthly, as members of an organized group, we are related to one another through our relation to the purpose of the group. For the essence of organization is arrangement of parts in relation to, or for the accomplishment of, a single general purpose; and this is the essence of an organized social group just as much as of a steam-engine. Our conscious knowledge of the general purpose, and of our own particular function in relation to it, has a very strong influence upon our thought and feeling and action.

Thus, in all our consideration of social behaviour, we are considering the behaviour of individual minds acting under the influence of a very complex set of factors, which we may roughly classify as follows:

Group-heritage and social heritage, and the sentiments aroused by these.

Association, or social contact, as such.

Fellow-feeling between members of the same group.

Consciousness of group purposes, and of our own and others' duties in relation to these.

And finally, as every one is a member of more than one group, these different influences are multiplied and complicated in proportion to the complexity of organization in society.

All this applies to any and all organized social groups and their members; and organized groups in this respect differ only in degree and not in kind. They are all alike 'organized systems of mental forces'; and this description applies with equal validity to a Church, a Nation, a fraternity of Freemasons, a University or College or School, a Trade Union, a family, and innumerable other groups.

Of each of these groups you may predicate 'mind and character', and even group 'self-consciousness'—if you remember always that you are only using metaphors. The 'mind and character' are nothing except the tendency of the members of the group to think and feel and act in ways influenced by the mental forces above explained. The 'mind and character' have no existence apart from the individual members of the group, and the mental forces (however systematized as a code of conduct, as tradition, and so on) have no independent existence—except so far as we must allow that any history or know-

ledge, which is greater than any individual mind can grasp, has a kind of independent existence. The group self-consciousness is nothing except the consciousness in the individual minds of the existence of the group, of membership of it, and of some part at least of its history, tradition, rules and purpose ; consciousness, therefore, of what the group stands for and what membership of it means.

If we wish to comprise all or some of these mental forces under a single term, we may call them the social environment. By the general social environment we mean all of them taken in their totality ; by special social environment, we mean the special influences belonging to any special social group. Every individual lives and acts in and conditioned by the general social environment ; every individual also lives and acts in and conditioned by several special social environments. This general and special conditioning (taken in conjunction with the conditions imposed by the individual's mental equipment) probably explains by far the most important part of the behaviour and constitution of the social individuals. But we are not yet in a position to say that we are nothing but social beings, nor that we are wholly subordinate to the social environment.

I suggest this mode of approaching and examining the social forces—which are so largely mental forces—as a safe alternative to the fiction of a social mind. My account may be very imperfect and open to much criticism in detail. But at least it harmonizes with the valid plea of the psychologist that society must be regarded chiefly as mind-stuff and mental forces ; it allows and compels full attention to these forces ; it compels us also to give due prominence to the influence of association and social organization in all its forms.

But, after all, I am not primarily concerned to indicate one mode of conceiving the social forces as preferable to a different mode. I should not have embarked upon criticism of the theories of Dr. McDougall and other writers (whose knowledge is much greater than mine) had it not been for the fact that their account of a real social mind destroys the very foundations of the philosophy which I hold to be essential. Herein lies the real objection to all such assumptions ; and I can best explain the objection in this way.

It is plain that the 'group mind' theorist is guilty of the same error as Comte, only in a much more dangerous form. The latter, in his recoil from the Theologian's mistake of positing an unknowable God in an invisible heaven, rushed to the other extreme of making 'humanity' itself its own god—but humanity abstracted from and infinitely greater than all human beings, an exalted metaphysical entity which could exist only in idea. The individual soul no longer existed as a reality: the only real Being was Humanity; individuals came and went, playing their little parts as cells of the great body, and then disappearing utterly. Very much in the same way the 'group-mind' advocates, in their quite intelligible recoil from an atomistic philosophy and the arid 'isolated individual mind' psychology, have rushed to the other extreme of submerging the poor individual altogether, and literally swamping him, not in a single Great Being, but in a welter of big and little beings called 'minds greater than any individual mind'. Comte was at least monotheistic; but this is polytheism run mad. For it is no exaggeration to call these new entities 'gods'. We are expressly told that the social Minds are the makers of all our minds; we draw *all* our mental content from them; every idea or aspiration or purpose is derived from them; to their wills our little wills are subordinate, as creatures to their creators. The fact that the new gods are many does not matter; but it does matter that the individual is swallowed up in them. The atomistic philosophy gave us an inexplicable isolated individual, who was unreal because he was isolated, with no intelligible relation to the universe in which he lived; his development and character and conduct could not be explained, nor could we explain the social structure in which he existed. But now we are carried to the other extreme. We are given an individual who is nothing except his relations: you come to the end of him when you exhaust the account of his relations to the social whole of which he is a part. And nothing real is left, except that social whole with its organized mental systems—the greater realities, of which a part resides in each individual, giving to him his only semblance of reality. In the former case, you could make nothing of the individual because he had no environment which he really touched; in the latter case you can make nothing of him, because he is all environment.

But the social psychologist does not stand alone in this



exaltation of the social environment at the expense of the individual. I think some at least of the idealist philosophers bring us dangerously near to it in a subtler form. It is fashionable now to speak of a 'moral organism' (whatever that may mean), from which all our standards and ideas of good are derived. The individual of the Utilitarian philosophy, who made morality out of his own head by calculations of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is rightly discarded. In his place we have an individual who is part of, and subordinated to, a moral organism. It is the community 'which alone gives the individual worth and significance'; 'upon it the individual is dependent for all his rights and all his liberty'. And 'what we call the individual man is what he is because of and by virtue of community, and communities are not names, but something real'. Herein, we are truly told, lies a revolution of ideas. 'Instead of starting from a central individual, to whom the social system is supposed to be adjusted, the idealist starts from a central system, in which the individual must find his appointed orbit of duty. But after all the revolution is only a restoration; and what is restored is the Republic of Plato.'

Would to heaven it were true that what is restored is the Republic of Plato! For Plato, of all people, best furnishes the corrective to the dangerous implications of all these conceptions of a 'moral organism' or a 'social mind'. Of course it is true that Plato presents his State as an 'organic' being, to which the individual as a citizen appears to be subordinate. The State is as completely organized as is the individual mind; and the citizen's function or duty is defined by his fixed place in this organization. Nor does his welfare as an individual appear to count for very much by comparison with the good of the whole society. To the objection that he has not made his citizens particularly happy (an objection which we all feel to be extraordinarily pertinent), Plato merely replies 'That is not the point. Our aim is to make the whole society as good as possible—though we may find that the citizens are happy too'. All this, I suppose, is taken as justifying the assertion that his Republic subordinates the individual to society. But this aspect of the matter is entirely changed when we consider what Plato is trying to do, and what his fundamental assumptions are. The 'Republic' is an inquiry into the nature of Goodness or Righteousness. Plato constructs his 'good State' in order to exhibit his conception of normal, human goodness 'in a large

scale model'. He assumes that the nature and character of any society are derived from the nature and character of the individual; consequently he arranges the good State after the exact pattern of the good man's mind. So far it is clear that the individual makes society—not the reverse. But the transcendent importance of the individual soul is shown much more explicitly. The supreme object of its existence is not social at all, but super-social or extra-social. It is, in fact, to win its way to another universe altogether—the universe of Reality which belongs to it in virtue of the spiritual reality which it contains. To this object, all social life and institutions are subordinate. The good State will help the individual soul to prepare for its final climb, and for that preparation the individual soul must be duly grateful to the good State (though he owes no debt at all to existing societies, which are not good). He must even pay his debt of gratitude by returning to the State to guide it, after he has reached his goal of Reality in another universe. All social influences—including the organization of society itself—fall into place in subordination to this supreme purpose of the individual soul. The good society, which is made by his qualities, is the nursery in which his mind and character are taught the initial habits of goodness; the training ground in which his soul is purged from the human dross which binds it to the earth. Thus society is not at all a 'moral organism' to which the individual must adapt himself; it is *only* an organized environment, which, at its very best, may help the individual soul in its long journey towards the light. Its 'goodness' is derived from the good individual's goodness, and not vice versa; and the good man's goodness is in turn derived from the eternal good which only the spiritual faculty of the soul can know. Society is not real, as the soul is real; it is the soul's servant, not his master.

It is as a follower of Plato that I take my stand against every elevation of Society over the individual, starting, like him, with the great assumption that the individual souls alone are real, and that Society, whether regarded as a system of mental forces or as an organization of moral forces, derives all its quasi-reality from the individual souls, and is subordinate to them, not they to it. I venture to think that the philosophers who exalt the 'moral organism', like the psychologists who exalt the social mind, lose the individual in the community just because they do *not* return to the Republic of Plato, but only

return to that social and political part of the Republic which shows the *citizen's* subordination, and omit entirely the profounder part which reveals the essential individual above and beyond society, and, in the end, above and beyond the whole 'cave' of changing human life.

Consequently, when we are told that the group-mind makes our minds and the group morality makes our morality, and that we derive *all* our equipment of thought and purpose from the almost boundless depths of the collective soul, we reply that this is a complete distortion. Our equipment is, in one aspect, all given, part by heredity, part by physical and other influences, part by education, and part by the example, precept and suggestion of others, alive and dead. It all seems to come from the environment. But, in a truer sense, it is none of it given, so far as it is ours. *We* are its makers, even we, the selectors and users of all the gifts of environment. We do not draw all the content of our souls from any social soul. We draw the material for most of our thought from countless suggestions of the physical, mental and psychical environment in which we live; but we make it ours by the action of our own individual souls. 'Yours is the choice: God is guiltless' is the true verdict to be passed on us.

And the whole conception of the social soul strikes at the root of that uncompromising individualism on which rests all hope of any good. You and I—and God: we alone are the real doers; we alone create and will. Society, like nature, is an incident in our path. God knows how important an incident it is! For the present it is enough that you and I take each other as seriously as any two souls can, each as the vital fellow to the other. And society, for me, is made up of 'you', just as, for you, it is made up of 'me'. What I owe you I can never fathom; what you do for me daily no tongue can tell. But you do not make or touch my soul. You offer it daily food; even in childhood I select and reject, and in my maturity the selection is never-ending, is indeed the mark of my character. But does that make you, in your millions, my overlord, my greater soul from whom I draw my sustenance? Not in the least; not really more than the nature which feeds my body is the master who makes my faculties and decides what I shall do with them.

You and I—and God; that is the final analysis of all that is real in human society. And it is enough. When I say that

society is progressing, I mean that the relations between us three are better than they were : just that and nothing else. When I say that all is not well with society, I mean that there is disharmony in the relations between us three—and nothing else. Turn where you will, you will find no completer account of social good and ill than that. And you will see it all the more clearly when you have swept away the fiction of society as a real being with a mind or soul that has any reality at all.

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#### NOTE ON THE SELF AND SOCIETY

We may perhaps present the relation of the individual to his society in a clearer way by starting from the explanation of the self and its unity. We must assume a central unifying principle in every conscious being. This may be no more (but no less) than a general but persistent impulse towards satisfactions, which holds together the particular impulses towards particular satisfactions which are connected with the various instincts. This general impulse may be called the will to live and to have life abundantly ; it includes therefore the will to go on living, and so the instinct of self-preservation, as well as the will to increase all pleasurable activity. Combined with intelligence (and therefore the power to compare experiences) it leads on to the ordering of activities resulting from particular impulses into some form of system ; and the self thus becomes an organized system of desires more or less subordinated to a general end.

Now there is no doubt that we carry this ' will for life ' with us into each social group which we join, to which we belong, and in so doing we give to the group both an element of conscious purpose and also the energy to work towards that purpose. There thus takes place a partial identification of the self with various social groups, and an infusion of more or less orderly purpose and energy into these groups. I find myself, for instance, ' willing ' the good of my family very much as I will my own good. I want it to have life abundantly ; I want it to be satisfied with all possible orderly satisfactions ; I want it to get on and succeed. And this will of mine becomes, in a sense, part of a wider will which we may call the will of the family. So too with every club or sub-society to which I belong—my school or college, my Church or political party ; and finally, my community as a whole, in so far as my membership



of it is accepted gladly. I thus will my community's good, and, by doing so, impart to my society the element of will.

In this way we get a clear view of the social will, not as any self-existent reality, but as a result of the projection of all the wills of good individual citizens. And the social will can be defined only as the will of the citizens *for* the society ; that is, for its life and success and power and satisfaction, exactly as the original impulse which we called the general impulse towards orderly satisfactions is the individual will for life and fullness of life.

Patriotism and loyalty to groups is at once explicable as a (normally) inevitable self-feeling. So far as I identify myself with any group, so far as I transfer to it my will to live, just so far am I bound to make its life and well-being my own.

## CHAPTER IV

### CIVILIZATION AND PROGRESS

**I**F I have explained rightly the essential fact of human society, then it is clear that the essential fact of civilized society is the ability of its members to live together as real citizens. Consequently, we fasten first upon the original implication of the word civilization. You and I are civilized if and when we have really learned to be 'cives', with all that the word implies. We might then, with perfect justice, go on to assert that no large groups, urban or national, are more than partly civilized; and that the term certainly cannot be applied to any collection of nations.

But common usage and human conceit demand a different meaning for the word. What we like to contemplate is the element in civilization called by the Germans *Kultur*; and we can contemplate that with great equanimity, whether we are good citizens or not. In deference then to our frailty and our habit alike, I am bound to use the word as connoting the condition reached by any society which possesses a certain undefined modicum of the arts and graces and refinements of life, together with a complex heritage of laws, customs and institutions, and whose members have, on the whole, realized enough 'citizenship' to ensure a fair stability for the whole group, and generally peaceful co-operation among most of its units. And when we speak of civilization as a possession to be treasured, guarded and handed on to posterity, we mean this whole environment, made by us and our ancestors, which forms the equipment of society—its complete outfit of tools of every sort.

But it must be borne in mind that, when we have widened our definition in this way, we have gone far to neutralize the meaning of civilization: have robbed it, indeed, of much of its connotation of definite goodness. We can no longer, without danger, speak of civilization as a good in itself. It possesses some elements of great worth, obviously: but they may be bound up with elements of so much evil as quite to outweigh

the quality of goodness. A group, even a nation, of very bad people might yet be civilized. But they would not be civilized in the simply good sense in which perhaps some of the poor communities of early Christians might be called civilized.

It must be borne in mind, further, that, if we accept the cultural definition of civilization, we must not confuse the issue by re-introducing the ideal definition which I indicated at first. For the social philosopher—or for any student of social life—one of the final questions to be answered is—What is the real value of civilization, or of this or that element in it? We may, with Edward Carpenter and others, regard civilization as an historical stage introduced by the growth of wealth and the establishment of private property—a stage of complexity which may or may not be inevitable; and we may, after investigation, either conclude that it is a very unpleasant and dangerous stage: a veritable descent into Hell, as Carpenter suggests; or else decide that it is a great improvement upon any other stage of social life known to us—even the Garden of Eden stage; and that it is continually being made better in the sense of becoming a better minister to the highest development of mankind. But we have no right to assume at the outset that it is either good or bad. Least of all have we any right to consider it in its cultural and therefore very complex aspect, and at the same time to define it as ‘the conquest of egoism by altruism’,<sup>1</sup> or to introduce into our definition any similar question-begging phrase. Whether cultural civilization helps or hinders altruism is one of the issues which we have to decide.

Progress is at once easier and far harder to define; or rather, the only right definition is far harder to present with even a show of plausibility. I have already said that progress (I am speaking of social progress, of course) is essentially nothing more nor less than the improvement of the relations between you and me—and God. You will say that this definition is a sheer outrage upon common sense. Well, I gave in to your common sense in the matter of civilization; but here I am bound to hold firm. In this matter we cannot afford to lose touch for one moment with the reality of good; and we shall wander into the paths of unreality the instant we try to make our definition less uncompromising. Moreover, it already contains everything of importance. In all social progress there is only one element which matters: we call it, shortly, the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. E. V. White, in *A Philosophy of Citizenship*, p. 33.

moral element. Everything else is beside the point. You would like to bring in to the idea some reference at least to increase of power, of diversity, of ordered complexity, perhaps too of the very attractive trimmings of our life which ingenuity creates. But do you not see that social progress, if it is taking place at all, may take place, not because of these things, but often rather in spite of them? We will deal with this more fully at a later stage; I must be content to be dogmatic here. I will talk with you gladly about scientific progress, about artistic progress, about cultural progress in any sense you like. That is all real enough and valuable enough in its place. But if we are to talk of social progress, for heaven's sake let us clear the field and keep to that alone by which the social life progresses: the difficult ascent from worse to better relations between the bare living realities of whom society consists. For is it not clear that progress implies some internal change? Some growth,—not outside us but within—of power to deal better with life? If I ask—Are you progressing? will you answer that you are making more money, surrounding yourself with more conveniences, comforts, or even beauty? You know that all that is beside the point. My question does not mean—How are you getting on in life?—but How is life getting on in you? Will you answer then that you are making more friendships, building up kindlier and finer relations between yourself and your family and your neighbours? That is much nearer to a valid answer, because it means that there is a change in you—in the social 'you' which makes possible the friendships and the amity. But you will only hit the heart of truth when you can answer, 'I am progressing because I am growing in the ability to deal well with my life—the whole of it, the life hidden within my soul and the life lived in the open among my neighbours.' For then you will have reached the progress which is causal of everything else: you are progressing because the kernel of life-power is increasing within you. And this is what I mean when I say that, in social progress, the moral element alone counts for much. For that implies the growth in you and me of greater power to deal well with the social life; and the signs of that growth are nothing else than the better relations between you and me which I call social progress.

We are at last in a position to inquire how far the evolution of society is, by its own movement, bringing us nearer to the attainment of the social good. And here I must confess at



once that I have placed myself in an obvious difficulty : I have already put the question out of court. For if my definition of society is correct—you and me, with all our furniture <sup>1</sup>—then it is futile to speak of the evolution of society at all. There is nothing left to evolve : certainly no ‘being’ or species of ‘being’. And this is the literal truth : there *is* no social evolution now ; there is only social change, social growth, social development if you will, but always in the sense of change, growth or development of you and me, or of our equipment, or of both. Social evolution was a reality once, in an earlier stage of our history ; and it still persists as an interesting survival wherever that stage survives. There you will find true evolution of groups, whose form and structure follow the evolutionary law of slow change in response to the demands of the environment and very little else. The earliest form of social organization was perhaps the small family group of the hunters and fishers ; and this species of social group came into existence naturally in an environment in which hunting and fishing were the sole or simplest methods of getting a living. It was the form of society appropriate to forest and river-side, and was naturally found there. On the other hand, the patriarchal group was the species of social grouping which alone could survive successfully in an environment in which the herding of animals was the sole method of livelihood ; and this form of social grouping was therefore found on the steppes or tundras, and still persists there. In the fertile valleys a new species of social group was called for by the environmental conditions, and again appeared naturally in response to the call. And these are examples of true social evolution. But when the ‘group’ became civilized society, it ceased to exist as a definite species of group whose form and structure are determined by environmental pressures. And in the ‘societies’ of which the world is chiefly composed to-day, both form and structure may be said to be independent of environment. Indeed, both have become relatively unimportant : it matters very little now whether a society poses as a monarchy or a democracy ; the significance of its life lies far deeper. And the significant changes which now take place in any society are not changes of form or structure, but changes at once more subtle and more profound. Moreover, they are caused no

<sup>1</sup> I am clearly compelled to leave out the third term in the relation in the present discussion.

longer by environmental conditions, but by the new element, unknown to scientific evolution, of purpose and will. The evolution of society has in fact put an end to itself as a true evolutionary process, by evolving what Professor Hobhouse<sup>1</sup> has called 'the increasing dominance of Mind', and therefore of purposive change. And this new mode of change is better termed development than evolution.

It is of course well known that the Darwinian evolution did not admit purpose in any shape or form : that is perhaps why nobody with any touch of the philosopher in him can be satisfied with Darwinian evolution ; even Herbert Spencer was not. From Samuel Butler onwards, there has been a host of rebels, and every one of them has insisted upon introducing purpose as a vital element in evolution. For these the full order of evolutionary change must be stated thus : function precedes organization, and desire or purpose precedes function. The most scientific exponent of this conception is perhaps Bergson ; the most thorough-going is undoubtedly Bernard Shaw. For the former the desire element may be no more (but no less) than an *élan vitale* : that is, a life-impulse, dominant and compelling, towards expansion or change. By the latter, the desire element is frankly and literally accepted ; the giraffe grew a long neck because he *wanted* to reach the higher foliage. Herein Bernard Shaw adopts (without acknowledgment) the very ancient Hindu doctrine : the desire to see has created the eye, the desire to hear has created the ear. I do not pretend to know how far either form of extreme Neo-Lamarckian theory is biologically tenable. But I know quite certainly that both suggest the only satisfactory account of social development.

Man has moved on by wanting new things ; and each desire or even each half-conscious sense of need has been followed (as it always is) by attempted function, then by invention of some device to make the functioning more perfect, and so to the full development of 'tools' adequate to perform the function fairly well, and so secure satisfaction of the desire. In this way society has obtained its organs or organized equipment ; and this is the process of change by which it is always seeking to improve its equipment and so obtain its satisfactions more surely. This is the only reasonable account of our social organs, from language to motor-cars, from Parliaments to drains. Our ancestors wanted to communicate with each other better

<sup>1</sup> See *Mind in Evolution*, and *Morals in Evolution*, by L. T. Hobhouse.

than by signs and noises: they invented the organ of language; just as to-day we have wanted to rush about in unnecessary ways at an unnecessary speed, and have therefore invented the 'organ' or tool of the automobile.<sup>1</sup> The organs and tools are of many forms: some are as simple as a pocket-knife, others as complicated as a constitution. Some are perfected very slowly, and have all the appearance of natural growth. They *do* grow naturally too; it is perfectly natural that they should appear in response to some aim or desire, and that they should be organized into more and more complex structure in the hope that so they will perform the required function better, and that they should change both structure and function as the purpose changes, or die out and disappear if the purpose no longer exists. The most necessary of society's organs to-day may be useless some centuries hence; in that case it will either be allowed to die, or else be altered to perform some new function. Our highly organized police system came into existence gradually because society desired corporate protection against lawless people instead of leaving it to each individual to protect himself. Hence the very inefficient watchmen and beadles at first, improved later into a complex organization of police officers and detectives. But suppose (if you can) that crime ceased to trouble us. Already we find that the police force has expanded its function far beyond its initial purposes; and it might still continue as a very valuable organ of society, even though its chief surviving function were that of regulating the traffic and preventing our killing one another in our haste to get about.

Now the 'tools' which society has evolved in response to

<sup>1</sup> This is not inconsistent with the principle noted in an earlier chapter, that desires become really operative only when the satisfactions desired have come within the range of practicability. But a double process is always going on. On the one hand, if we are at all imaginative, we allow our fancy to play with all sorts of imagined satisfactions, any of which are ready to become objects of active desire if the opportunity of attainment seems to be within reach. On the other hand, combinations of circumstances suggest particularly desirable utilities (at present unattainable) upon which the attention of practical and inventive people becomes focussed; and this concentration of attention often leads to a discovery of means of attainment hitherto unthought-of. It is for this reason that inventions so often seem to be made just when the need for them is greatest—a phenomenon which must have struck most students of recent industrial history.



desire and purpose form the whole structure of society. When they are accepted and organized they are called its institutions ; and social institutions can only be defined as the organized expressions of society's purposes. But our tools include far more than our institutions. Every new bit of knowledge, every invention, every new conception and even every new word—all are tools evolved to help us to deal with life. And here the dominance of purpose is of supreme importance in the explanation of any change or phase. ' By their fruits ye shall know them ' is no truer than ' By their tools you shall know the ruling desire of each age or people '. In a religious age, not only churches and cathedrals, but the literature, language, art, social arrangements, all reflect the religious impulse. In a scientific age, we are busy inventing and perfecting tools of knowledge—by every sort of research and inquiry—where-with to fulfil the very different purposes of our very pushing life. And does not the mark of this too run through all our doings—the doings of us very modern people who clamour for science to displace literature in the education of our children, and, for the salvation of ourselves, put our faith in hospitals and laboratories but not in churches ?

In what sense may this vast equipment which we call civilization be called also progressive ? It is, of course, a commonplace that evolution (in the scientific sense) has no more connexion with progress than with purpose. Fitness to survive in relation to whatever environment happens to exist is the only fitness which nature cares about. Size and complexity are no clue to this fitness ; the changing environment will make short work of both if its change happens to favour the small and simple beings. But this very vapid conception of fitness was quickly changed by popular thought into the more attractive conception of fitness in the sense of superior ability or even excellence. Herbert Spencer assisted this introduction of the positive idea of progress ; and his definition of evolution was intended to be also a definition of change from lower to higher types, from worse to better forms of being. The essential elements in it were advance from less to greater complexity of structure and function, from less to greater organization of parts and processes, and from less to greater mass or size. This of course settled the question of the progress of civilized society. No one could dispute its growth in complexity and



mass ; therefore it is progressive. This happy conclusion was quite in line with contemporary thought. Progress was an assumption of the nineteenth century—a comfortable though blind assumption accepted as axiomatic, about which we are only now beginning to feel serious qualms. Further, both the popular and the Spencerian conceptions of evolution introduced the conception of purpose as a necessary element in social progress. Evolution towards ever greater complexity is not a comforting thought unless the complexity helps the evolving being to get through its work better. But very strangely, neither Spencer nor popular thought applied this test to their assumption of progress. Now, if I invent a clock excelling in size and complexity all other clocks, you will not call it an improvement unless it also keeps better time (and perhaps lasts longer) than all other clocks. So with all our 'tools' of civilization, and with the whole mass of civilization itself. Before we can call it progressive, we must be able to say that it fulfils its function or purpose better than whatever preceded it. We can define that function very simply : civilization or civilized society exists to make us happy. In other words, the only test is the relation of our civilization to our ability to attain the good. If it increases that ability, it is progressive ; if it hinders or lessens that ability, it is retrogressive. But the application of the test is not easy. As in the matter of survival, so in this case we appear to be in the old difficulty expressed in the Solonian maxim—' Call no man happy until he is dead '. We do not know—yet—whether our modern civilization will endure, or whether it will soon kill both itself and us ; we do not even know—yet—whether it is really adding to our total good or happiness. How far we can come to any conclusion at all will be discussed when our full analysis has been made. At this point I must needs leave the question open. But I wish here to emphasize the fact that, whether the popular conception of our present progressive ' evolution ' is right or wrong, it can at this stage be nothing more than an assumption, resting not upon evidence but upon our desire and hope alone.

There is, however, one aspect of our civilization to which most of us believe the term ' progressive ' may be applied without doubt or question. Do not our scientific discoveries and inventive achievements stand the test of fulfilment of purpose ? Need we wait another century before we attach the label of

'progress' to that part of our civilization which, in the form of scientific knowledge, has already proved that it is also power? Can we not obviously *do* things which the world never dreamed of before? Or is this also an illusion, an 'idol of the market-place' which we accept as real because it has the support of those arch-idolaters, the men of science? These huge aggregates of human beings which we call our 'societies'—whose size at any rate is progressive—are they not enabled to live an assured co-operative life because the power of new knowledge has cleansed the environment and brought the world's resources within the quick reach of all? Famines are now as far behind most of us as are plagues; the world is one vast highway over which all who have the will to work may send out or bring in the balance of their surplus or the balance of their need. We are proud of the security of these vast aggregates of workers; we are proud of the complexity of their equipment and their activities; above all, we are proud of their power—the fast growing power with which science is endowing them—over nature and the recalcitrant forces of nature.

I think our confidence in their security and their coherence has been a little shaken during the past few years; we are not quite happy about the use they are inclined to make of their new powers. But I wish here to call attention to a different aspect of the matter. Just as we know that there still exist fairly large aggregates of beings who are almost as simple and impotent as primitive man himself (whoever he was), so we are now being forced to admit that, in the far distant past, there may have been and probably were huge aggregates of people as compact, as complex, and as ingenious as ourselves. The evidences of astounding civilizations are being unearthed on every side, whose date goes back not thousands, but tens of thousands of years. And these, not in the old world of Egypt or Asia alone, but in Mexico, in South America, and even in the scattered islands of the Pacific. A few years ago the myth of Atlantis was only a myth; to-day it seems likely that not only Atlantis but the still more shadowy Lemuria will have to be taken seriously. A few years ago most of us (being less wise than Aristotle) thought it sheer absurdity to imagine that scientific knowledge, once firmly established and widely used, could ever be utterly wiped away like writing on a slate. But now geologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, and many other representatives of respectable sanity and research, admit the

possibility of the long-ago existence of powerfully equipped civilizations, which not only disappeared entirely, but dragged with them into oblivion the powers and inventions by which their civilization had been built up.

It is no longer certain that the social development which Spencer called evolution is even a fact. It is at least a possibility that 'progress' has been intermittent and recurrent, like the tides of an ocean; and that no one high tide may ever say 'I am the highest'.

Are we on firmer ground when we interpret evolution as the evolution of the individuals who compose society? If the human species has evolved from some preceding animal species, it seems probable that the evolution of sub-species has continued as part of the same process. Hence the different races of men, with their different physical attributes and their different forms of adaptation to varying environments. We may add, with their different mentalities, too; though it is at present uncertain whether the apparent difference between, let us say, the mentality of an African and that of a European is as profound as the physical difference of skin and hair, or whether the former differences are only transient modes of thought and feeling induced by the difference of environment and mode of life. But even so, evolution helps us little. The question of importance for us is—Has man, white or black or yellow, shown any progressive development of faculties and attributes, physical, mental and moral, in the past? And can we hope that such progressive development is going on now and will continue?

The answer of almost all competent observers is in the negative. There is no real evidence of any change in the faculties and powers of man since humanity first appeared upon the earth. On the one hand, the discoveries already referred to of very ancient civilizations seem to show that our far-off predecessors were no whit inferior to us in organizing ability, mechanical genius, and the power of ruling and directing others. On the other hand, the evidence of prehistoric human remains is indecisive. Some are of a low type; some are of a type whose physique and cranial capacity would be considered creditable to-day. And I suppose that, if our world were submerged now, and a succeeding race were to dig up our records, it would also find that debased and feeble types (similar to that of some of the dwarfs of Central Africa) existed side by



side with the exalted type of the Anglo-Saxon. That is what we find of the world of one hundred thousand or two hundred thousand years ago ; we can draw no useful inference.

But the illusion of progress in mental capacity dies hard. It seems to rest so surely upon evidence drawn from closer sources. There is no need to go back to an unknown past ; we compare ourselves with our near ancestors, and find—or think we find—sure proof of our advance. Have we not progressed in power of appreciation ? The Greeks and Romans of old had as little admiration for the grandeur of nature as Dr. Johnson had for the rugged hills of Scotland. Less than two centuries have passed since a leader of English culture considered it daring to assert that he found the scenery of the Swiss Alps both pleasing and genteel. Have we not developed a new power of appreciation here ? Yet how easily we can supply the corrective to our vanity. Have we not lost the power—so abundant in the Periclean age in Athens and the Elizabethan age in England,—of appreciating the bare beauty of drama without any adventitious aids of scenery or costume or even action ? Imagine, if you can, the reception of a modern play staged as were the Greek tragedies, or the plays of Shakespeare in the early seventeenth century.

But we are quicker to learn ? Our brains have a more facile grasp. An intelligent modern child has learned all that Euclid knew of mathematics by the age of 14 ; a youth of 16 in a technical school has mastered all the science of mechanics known to Archimedes. True ; but is any one of them all capable of becoming a Euclid or an Archimedes ?

Often I have persuaded myself that we excel our fathers in common sense, or the application of reason to the conduct of life. Their childish fallacies (perhaps I had better not add, their superstitions) are patent to us ; we wonder how they could have been taken in by them. Well : are we prepared to boast ? There is hardly one of us who does not *know* that war is a fallacy : we do not need the arguments of a Norman Angell to prove it to us. But we are not rational : we are hardly more rational than primitive man himself. Do I not *know* that I shall be a loser every time I lose my temper ? Yet I continue to lose it with lamentable frequency, over perfectly trivial incidents. I cannot think that any really rational being would allow humanity to be classed in the same genus with himself.

But are we not more long-sighted, more capable of deferring



satisfaction and sustaining effort ? A savage soon wearies of a task, and will throw away the good of many morrows for the pleasure of to-day. We are so different that it has even become a reproach to us that we have taken Samuel Smiles for our prophet. Certainly there is something almost superhuman in the work-scheme of a Zola, or even of a Herbert Spencer ; but are we superior to the builders of our cathedrals or of the pyramids of Egypt, in long vision and sustained effort ?

For a time I believed that I had found a sure field of progress in the growth of the capacity for humour—a by no means unimportant life-faculty. I do not mean that it is a new thing : there was plenty of it among the ancient Greeks, in Socrates, for instance, just as surely as in Democritus or Aristophanes. But it is becoming widespread to-day as never before. No observer can deny, I think, the astonishing general growth of the sense of humour in the English people during the last thirty years. I do not venture to define humour ; but at least we may agree that it is a mood rather than a faculty, a temperamental affection rather than a mental power. And as such it appears to wax and wane in strange ways. The Irish *were* a humorous as well as a witty people a short time ago. But it would hardly occur to a visitor to-day to notice that as one of their characteristics.

Has our moral capacity increased ? Are we more continent, more honest than our predecessors ? If we could say that our behaviour is better, we should have answered the only question about progress that matters : the growth of mental power would then, at any rate, become a secondary interest. But it needs a very daring optimist to say that the average individual in a modern society is superior in honesty to the old Chinese, with whom scrupulous keeping of contracts was a habit of their commercial class until the traders from other countries taught them to be more up-to-date.<sup>1</sup> And our virtue in the matter of continence, self-control and temperance is not obvious enough to call for unbounded admiration. We may be better than some of our ancestors ; it is doubtful whether most of us would compare favourably with our own parents.

But if we have no sure ground for saying that the individual member of society has progressed in mind-power, surely we

<sup>1</sup> An American writer has stated that this was the result of the introduction of American methods of trade. I think others may perhaps share the blame.

can say that he has become the master of his destiny and the shaper of his ends, in a way unknown to his more primitive ancestors? His brain may be the same in size and in potential ability; but has he not learned to use it fearlessly and freely in the work of adapting his environment to his needs, of writing his purposes on the face of nature, of fastening his will upon the blind movements of all change, of using his growing equipment of tools to mould life according to his own pattern? What else is meant by that increasing dominance of mind to which I have referred as the causal factor which has superseded the natural evolution of human society?

Remember, first, that I accepted the phrase only as the expression of the fact that desire and purpose were the forces which become increasingly operative in our development. But desire and purpose belong to the practical mind, the mind of the doer; and this is never rational as is the mind of the thinker. Its decisions are never 'thought out': desire leaps, it does not proceed by any orderly march of measured steps. It is never right—as the conclusions of the thinker's mind may be right. It is only right if the agent is wholly in tune with life and its deepest needs. When therefore we say, not incorrectly, that we are becoming freer, both as individuals and as groups, to mould the future to our purposes, even as we are freer to make our tools what we desire them to be, we mean no more than this: that, by comparison with our more fettered ancestors (but not, perhaps, by comparison with the peoples of far past civilizations), we are now more completely 'agents', able to apply our will and choice in a more open world, with fuller consciousness that it is we who are directing the car, and not the road. But we are no nearer an assurance that we are not moving faster to destruction. The increasing dominance of mind does not mean increasing dominance of wisdom, or of understanding, or even of knowledge.

And the admission of this little freedom must itself be modified, if not indeed negated, by another fact. We think of early man as a slave to his natural environment, unable even to plan for himself a small divergence from the life dictated by necessity. But are we freer? Or are we too fettered by the bonds of a necessity which is no less real because it is neither seen nor felt?

This treasured heritage, our civilization, has been built up to be the servant of our purposes; and in the end we are domin-

ated by it. We become the creatures of the vast paraphernalia of devices and organization of implements which we have created. We make our tools, and at once become their slaves. This is most true of humanity's subtlest tools—that intangible mass of mental ingenuities which ranges from words to scientific systems, from formulae to religious creeds. Many a man is rightly called a slave to words and phrases ; far more are slaves to formulae—scientific, political, ethical—which are only meant to serve, like shorthand notes, as aids to memory and clear thought. The ' dapper creeds of the past ' have smothered and enslaved their thousands ; the equally dapper agnostic dogmas of science are doing the same disservice to their tens of thousands to-day. There is no need of an astrologer to foretell an individual's life ; the only horoscope needed is the answer to the question—What period and in what circle has he been born ? What tools have been put into his hands ? With what ' organs ' of conception and knowledge has he been endowed ? Tell me this, and I will tell you what sort of ' truth he will carve out of the universe, what sort of house of faith he will build, what road he will map out for his life's journey.

Consider the men of the nineteenth century. No better—and no more attractive—example of an independent thinker could be found than John Stuart Mill. Born in the narrowest of all sects—that of dry rationalism—brought up in a circle in which prestige attached only to those critical and positive principles in which the passion for emancipation from all authority had found expression ; plunged into a world in which the cleverest men had such an outrageous belief in science that they simply could not believe in anything else—except political economy, which they also (wrongly) regarded as science ; what *could* Mill develop into, in spite of all his goodness, his charm, his independence of spirit, except what he actually was at the age of 35 : the still, cold logician, the utterly assured propounder of a philosophy so ' positive ' that it contained no germ of vital truth at all ; the last and final expositor of an economic doctrine whose tragedy—for him—was that it was so complete and final as to leave nothing either for himself or anyone else to add to it ; a veritable Alexander of the intellectual world, with nothing left to conquer—and not even a Bucephalus to be humanly fond of. And this tragedy of a man was *made*—from top to bottom—by the medium into which he was born.

He had the good fortune to be saved from himself by two

accidents : a woman's love and a long life. He outlived all those earlier tool-makers and users, his father, Comte, Ricardo, Grote, Buckle and the rest. And living on into a new age, he learned to change his tools and fashion a new world for himself, a world not only of human affections and enthusiasms, but of toleration, uncertainty, and the blessing of doubt. He found that he could do more than add something to his economic theory : he could also take away a great deal. He even began, in the new atmosphere, to see that those ' final doctrines which no intelligence could question ' were after all not very much more than partial truths over-emphasized and exalted to meet the needs of the time—the need of more wealth for the nation, and the need of cheap labour for the manufacturers who alone could make that wealth. Mill at 60 was a very changed man ; but once again, was it not the change of environment which made him so ? One cannot help thinking that, if only he had lived fifty years later, he would assuredly have been one of the Fabian Essayists. And I think we may take any one of the heroes of nineteenth-century achievement, and, without undue imagination or violation of probabilities, suggest that, if the date of his birth had been a little later, he would have appeared as a totally different being, not only working with new tools at a new job, but—more important—working with new aims in a new direction.

But all this is fairly obvious. And if so, does it not mean that we are very literally the creatures of circumstance ? That it is not man who is master of his fate, but his fate which is master of the man ? And further, if this is so, is it not change of circumstance, that is, of the tool-environment, which is the one thing needful ? We have, indeed, not yet made the case strong enough. We like to speak of *our* purposes as the lever of change, of ourselves as the makers and artificers of the organs which become the structure of social life. Still a delusion, is it not ? We are allowed to play at our tool-making : to seem to follow our own ideas and designs in constructing the scenery of the stage on which to play our self-appointed parts. But does it not appear now that we are no more than puppets in God's endless pageant

Which for the pastime of eternity  
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold ?

The evolution of humanity again holds the stage ; our parts



fall into place with its scheme ; and it is unrolled from scene to scene in obedience to a purpose unknown, inscrutable, and all-compelling. What else *can* the philosopher think of this life of ours, in which (to change the metaphor) we are swung blindly along by whatever wave of time we chance to be caught by ?

Now there are two conclusions to be drawn from all this. One is that the increased powers of a more complex civilization do not make man any freer than he was in simpler stages when his equipment was much less. The other is that every one of us is made what he is by his circumstances. The former is true, and needs no further illustration. The latter is false, and its speciousness needs to be exposed at once. If we bear in mind that society means just you and me and God, and the relations between us, we can go on to assert boldly that *all* these other complexities are really accidents, affecting only the dress of the actors and their scenery, but not the essence of their acts and life and relations to one another. Certainly this is a bold saying ; but it follows firmly from our definition of social life, and in turn the resolution of the difficulty confirms that definition.

Look more closely at the example I have taken—J. S. Mill. We say that he was cast in the mould in which he played his part in life by the fixed circumstances of his parentage, period, and surroundings. Not so. The essential ' he ' was not made by these at all ; the essential fact about him has nothing to do with these things. John Mill was a good man : one of the very best of men, who did his best to make his world better. That is what supremely matters ; and that fact was independent of any distortions forced upon his mind and thought. His philosophy was (I think) deplorable ; his political views were (I think) mistaken often and mischievous sometimes. But I would like to have John Mill as a brother, a friend, a neighbour, a fellow citizen ; and I am sure the world—at any time—would be better for many more like him. He fulfilled the essential relationships finely ; and he would have done so equally with different opinions, different dogmas, different conceptions to work with.

Apply the test to ourselves. We grumble—heavens ! how we grumble !—at the narrowness of circumstance, the limitation of opportunity, the dearth of chances, and the poorness of the stuff of life dealt out to us. Out upon it ! What does it matter what dress the great Designer has given you for your part in the

play? What matter whether you have a small part or a big one? Is it too difficult for you? Then that is your opportunity, to show your power as an actor. Is it too trivial? Play it well, and it will rank with the best. You *never* have a part different from all others in essentials. There are always you and I upon the stage; each of us always has his fellow actor to help or hinder; each of us has the perfect part and the complete part before him. And we turn aside to complain about our costume!

This belittling of the significance of everything in our environment except the separate individuals and their conduct of life, will seem to many perverse to the point of absurdity. I only ask them to consider whether any other view does not lead them into quite insoluble difficulties. The dilemma of the domination of environment can be resolved in one way only: by fearlessly insisting that there is an inner and an outer you or I: a real individual and a partly real outer person, which make up the whole of each of us; and that the inner you or I, the real you or I, is the maker and creator, while the outer personality is (within some limits, but within undefinable limits) made and created by the outer influences which we call our civilization.

I have slurred over a very real difficulty, which may not be shirked any longer. In the account of John Mill, I asserted that *all* the characteristics which he drew from his particular environment were non-essential in our estimate of the man. One of these characteristics, inevitable perhaps with such a father and such friends and in such an age, was his agnosticism or lack of any religious belief. Was that too of no importance? Does religion not matter in relation to goodness? Very plain speaking is the only honest policy here. I cannot think that any intelligent being will deny that the form of religion professed by each of us is (at first at any rate) determined solely by our birth. A native child born in Bengal becomes naturally a Hindu: in Arabia, a Moslem; in Italy or Spain or peasant Ireland, a Roman Catholic; in parts of England, a Protestant Christian. If we say that a man's religion is normally an accident determined by his place of birth, we are not passing beyond the evident facts. So too the different shades and varieties of each faith are, in the main, determined for us by our parentage. A Churchman's family is naturally of the Church; a Dissenter's family as naturally

belongs to Dissenters; and in some families the children, equally naturally, are nothing at all. The family of James Mill was one of these; it was not John Mill's fault. Now it is a result of our human frailty (chiefly of our self-assertion) that we each think his own religious belief the only true one—unique, indeed, among all religions. We allow poets to write of the various 'broken lights of God', and to tell us that 'Many paths hast Thou fashioned: all of them lead to the light'. But we seldom agree with them. We do not include our own light or path in the general category. Hardest of all is it to admit that all the broken lights are relative, all the paths partial and wavering. Yet I defy anyone to propound any kind of intelligible theory of social life and development who does not first admit this, and allow further that every form of religious belief which exists or has ever existed is a growth which is always changing—a relative thing, formed into a thousand shapes, some beautiful and some hideous, by the same processes which are for ever moulding our moral, aesthetic and social creeds.

You can therefore no more admit, as a social philosopher, that all the world is dwelling in darkness except that part of it which has been born in the Christian West, than you can assert that all those who have been born in the Christian West are really living in the light.

Does this degrade religion to the level of all the other man-made tools of thought, concept, and system? If you mean by religion a particular conception of Jehovah or God or Brahma or Allah, together with some complicated form of creed and ritual, then you can only avoid this conclusion by asserting that each conception, together with its creed and ritual, has been revealed to man by powers not belonging to this social world at all. Very likely you are right; it is of no importance. One thing only matters—religion itself. And as that means always in all parts of the world just one thing—the recognition of spiritual reality behind *all* phenomena, including the changing personalities of you and me, and our creeds—you will see that it is independent of anything whatever belonging to the development of society and its civilization. It is not a social production at all. It is the discovery and the possession of that which is master throughout every change, that which I have called the real Agent or Doer of everything—the individual 'I' within the soul of each of us. 'I have seen

God' is the full and final statement of religion everywhere. And it is the one statement which is more than a belief, more than a concept, more than an expression of hope or faith ; and therefore stands out of reach of all influences which mould our beliefs or conceptions or modes of expression. It is outside the world of development and change.

But the difficulty presented by John Mill and other good agnostics is not yet resolved. We must consider it in a rather different light. A religious creed resembles in some ways a moral code. A man may believe very firmly in the prevailing moral code without being a good man, just as a man may be a strong supporter of the prevailing religion without being in the least religious. But if a man refused to accept any moral code at all, we should be inclined to doubt even his will to be good ; and if a man refuses to accept any religious creed at all, are we not right in thinking that he lacks the will to be religious ? For after all, the religious creed is the sheath within which the will to know God must develop, and without which—in some form—it is not easy for that will to exist at all. Now Mill held aloof from all religious creeds. Is it not a logical conclusion that he did not want to be religious ?

I am afraid our verdict must carry us beyond Mill and his agnostic circle. In the first place, in the lives of many individuals there are strange ebbs and flows of the interest in religion. According to the Hindus, every twelfth year is a climacteric in the psychic life of the individual, bringing some change, great or small, in his attitude to religion. Few will deny that there is a strange periodicity in all the deepest parts of our being, especially in our care for the things that matter most. If you believe (as you must if you follow Plato) that the soul's life is a very long one, not limited to one or even two or three human existences, then it is not hard to suppose that a similar periodicity prevails in this longer life, and may manifest itself in apparent indifference to religion in any one lifetime. If so we have an explanation of that rather puzzling phenomenon, the prevalence, at certain periods, of men of the very highest character and enthusiasm for good who are nevertheless devoid of any interest in religion. The religious impulse is latent in them.

But a different consideration is less comforting. Orthodox people have good reason at all times to look askance at ' intellectuals '. The latter are never likely to be good sheep in any



fold—even a rebel fold : one does not expect the same kind of faith in an Erasmus as in a Luther. But when a wave of irreligion carries away most of the best intellectuals, there is probably a special cause at work ; and if many of the best men and women (who are not quite the same as the best intellectuals) join in the revolt, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the faults and follies of the orthodox are the cause. The deadness of religion in England during the eighteenth century had this inevitable result ; and the Mills and many like them were part of that result. And despite the revival of religious enthusiasm which followed the teaching of Wesley and Whitefield, and the later revival more definitely within the English Church, one need not search very closely in the life of the nineteenth century to find the cause of so many followers of Mill, who—though their actions showed that they too were on the side of the good—preferred to be called atheists in the company of Mill and his friends, rather than be called Christians in a much larger company.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PROGRESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

I AM not foolish enough to imagine that any one will be really satisfied with the account I have given of the 'unprogressive' individual and the civilized environment whose amazing development only serves to wrap him tighter in a given armour of dogmas, prejudices, estimates and attitudes. If the individual grows only outside himself—in his tools and equipment—how can social progress take place at all? For society means only the individuals who compose it, and the relations between them: the relations change, undoubtedly; but if the individual shows no intrinsic change, how can this other change take place, except as a reaction to the change of the civilized environment? That cause we have already admitted to the full; we have seen that the reactions of civilization produce developments of desire, of self-assertion, and perhaps too of social aptitude in the individual, which may or may not lead to real progress. But is that all? If so, any progress there may be comes as an unplanned and unforeseen result of combinations of circumstances essentially outside ourselves. Its character may be altered at any moment: a little more civilization may set us all fighting, in the passionate desire for 'more'; a partial failure (due to nature's perversity) in the supply of the material elements of it, may at any moment set us all at each other's throats, in the passionate desire for 'enough'. Is that all? Surely there is some orderly process of development in the individual soul which gives some better hope than this?

I believe there is. I believe that the deep-seated faith in the reality of progress has its foundation in reality: and that this reality is the most important thing in our social life. But I think we must go behind the usual expression of that faith if we are to discover its significance. It is generally presented as a belief in two very different things: first, a steady growth in the *sensitiveness* of the individual; secondly, a

steady development of *self-consciousness*. These we will consider separately.

Increased sensitiveness, or greater capacity for feeling, is said to be shown, not only by greater sensitiveness to pain, but also by wider interest, greater joy, and fuller life.<sup>1</sup> Now it is a very general assumption that civilized man has a more sensitive nervous system than uncivilized man, and is much more acutely sensitive to bodily pain, and, I suppose, correlatively, to bodily pleasure. No one, of course, can measure the quality of feeling; but we can measure its quantity, by its reactions; and some of the comparisons of reaction undoubtedly point to less sensitiveness in a savage than in an Englishman, and less sensitiveness in a stolid labourer than in a highly-strung aristocrat. But the totality of reactions—so far as one can observe them—leaves one puzzled; most of all are we puzzled when we consider the reactions which are important in relation to the social character and capacity of the individual. For of all the mental effects which one must suppose will follow from greater sensitiveness to pain, none is more sure than increased sensitiveness to the imagined pains of others, and therefore sympathy with their sufferings and antipathy to infliction of pain. If this is not a result, then there is nothing socially progressive in the increased sensitiveness, and it possesses no significance for the social philosopher. It is at this point that comparison of the present with the past presents such strange difficulties. A few years ago a number of highly civilized and educated people were publicly asserting that animals do not feel.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the stupidity of a doctrine which at once negatives the possibility of animals learning anything from experience, what are we to think of the increased sensitiveness to the imagined pains of others in the case of these dogmatists? Is that the kind of progress we are to get from our greater sensitiveness? Or is that the mark of our superiority to the coarse-grained savage? Further, this greater sensitiveness will of course make deliberate or wanton cruelty impossible, will it not? We cannot explain Chinese torturers except by assuming callousness to pain on the part of the Chinese who apply the tortures. No doubt; but

<sup>1</sup> I take these definitions from *The Philosophy of Citizenship*, by E. V. White—a short and quite popular account of Civics.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Berkeley had proclaimed the same strange doctrine. But Berkeley's passion for perversity amounted so nearly to a form of 'possession', that he can hardly be held accountable.

how many centuries have passed since systematic tortures were used in European countries—in the name of God and religion? Or how many years have passed since some of the most civilized people in the world re-introduced torture on a grand scale as one among other enlightened methods of warfare? I think we had better not boast of the civilized man's superiority to his ancestors—yet. Possibly a full comparison, if it could be made, would reveal an odd mixture of loss and gain—of loss of fortitude, perhaps, side by side with greater attention to sensation and less physical resistance.<sup>1</sup>

We are told also that wider interest, greater joy and fuller life are a result of civilized man's increased sensitiveness. With regard to the first, there is a very general confusion between more power of being interested and more stuff to stimulate our interest. Of the latter there is no doubt; and it may very easily be the concomitant of less, not greater, power of being interested. Of the former, there is no evidence at all. If we take for comparison an intelligent Greek of two thousand years ago, or an intelligent Phoenician of three thousand years ago, or an intelligent Egyptian of four thousand years ago, I think we must admit that each one of these would probably have been at least as interested in life to-day as you or I. Can we compare ourselves with more primitive people? It is not easy: in many cases we have given them so much opportunity of contact with our own basest interests, and so little opportunity of testing our best interests, that they have, by their excess of interest in the former, exterminated or debased themselves before a fair comparison can be made. But if we take the negroes who were imported into America as slaves three or four generations ago, can we say that their minds show a deficiency of interest in civilized life? If so, in what department? Not in education, certainly not in commerce, nor in political life, nor in any new things. If they were more apathetic, the problems before the United States of America would be simpler than they are.

If greater joy and fuller life mean anything at all, the phrase

<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes asserted that women have less organic sensitiveness than men: their nervous organization is simpler and stronger, they can bear strains and injuries which the male organism cannot. If this is true, it makes it all the harder to trace a connexion between general sensitiveness and the greater sympathy which is the only socially valuable form of it.



means that joy is more plentiful and life more abundant. Will you seriously maintain this? Certainly the 'natural man' of Hobbes exists still in some places, 'poor, nasty, and brutish' if not actually 'solitary'. But the 'noble savage' of Rousseau—whom it has been the fashion to ridicule—is probably truer to type. Good health, cheerfulness, and joy of life are the outstanding characteristics of many of them, coupled often with special virtues (such as honesty and family affection) which are certainly not inferior to ours. *We* have killed both their joy and their virtue, in many cases; and we despise the bad specimens which are sometimes the only ones left. But let us be our own judges, in the matter of joy. Why do so many of us—the majority of the people whom I know, certainly—insist that childhood was the happiest time of their life? Could there be a sadder confession of failure to live well? And is it perhaps a fact that in this aspect also the history of the individual recapitulates the history of the race? You will hardly contradict me when I assert that it is characteristic of civilized man to be rather care-worn, rather cumbered,—not by much service, but by the multitude of things he has to look after,—rather wanting in the spontaneous joy of life, and very prone to be bored if his accustomed paraphernalia of enjoyments are taken away.

The growth of self-consciousness introduces far more important considerations. This is often taken to imply merely that we now possess a greater awareness both of ourselves and others, and of our power and destiny. But this means no more than that we are more reflective or do actually think more than our early predecessors; and this in turn may mean, not at all that there is more power of reflection in the individual, but that there are now many more individuals who reflect. This is almost certainly true, and is a fact of very great importance. We cannot compare ourselves with any societies existing before the dawn of history; but in the cycle covered by historical records we can safely say that human societies have never before contained so many units who are 'grown up' in consciousness, or wide awake. The fact that every other civilization depended upon slave labour seems to be a sure evidence of this.

But, though this introduces a new condition of our life and a new factor in social development, it does not of necessity imply any new power in us individuals; nor can we yet say that it is

an advantage or a disadvantage, a factor for good or a factor for evil. Moreover, this greater awareness on the part of very many units of society in our advanced democracies is not necessarily related to any development of self-consciousness. It may simply imply no more than a fuller awakening to the possibilities of enjoyment in a very seductive world. Whether it does in fact point to a really progressive growth can only be determined when we have examined the meaning of self-consciousness.

I must ask to be forgiven if I become dogmatic here, for I do not know how else to make clear my meaning. And I must at all costs do so ; for, though I do not believe that there is any individual progress in the sense of development of new or greater mental power, I do believe that one of the purposes of the whole social process is the unfolding of the individual soul and his knowledge of himself.

The consciousness of animals is, as far as we know, simple : it is no more than awareness of feeling without any clear recognition of duality, that is, without reflective distinction of self from not-self. Human self-consciousness begins when this duality is realized, and the ' I ' becomes an object of thought, and therefore a cause of sustained purpose—a kernel, as it were, round which desires and aims are consciously grouped.

This first stage of self-consciousness brings with it the social stage of conscious recognition of difference and antagonism between the ' I ' and all other ' I's.' The ' herd feeling ' becomes complex : in place of instinctive consciousness of kind and instinctive antagonism of the separate units (the latter manifested chiefly under the impulses of desire for food and desire for mates), there appears the sympathy based upon reflection and the considered antagonism due to known or expected clash of purposes.

But the recognition of duality spreads. It leads on to a second stage, whose mark is conscious opposition of the obvious self to a possible better self. This latter in turn becomes an object of reflective thought, and therefore a cause of *ideal* purpose.

This second stage brings with it, as its social counterpart, the recognition of a general good, or possible better state, for society ; and this recognition in turn operates as a cause of social idealism.

Desire for unity now appears as the chief among all the ideal

purposes. The recognition of the good self, as more real than the unsatisfactory and never-satisfied 'seeking' self, follows inevitably—the only possible conclusion of reflective thought. Unity, therefore, is seen to imply subordination to this good self.

This recognition again has its external or social counterpart. There arises, first, the consciousness of the social good as a counterpart to the good self; and therefore, secondly, a desire on the part of the member of society for harmony with this good, and subordination of self-seeking desire to its needs.

But the development of self-consciousness is not yet complete. I have become conscious of a good self which is to be made master, and the good of society which is to be made paramount. But I have yet to recognize the good self as at once ideal and real. That is the last stage—as far as we can yet see. We go on to recognize the would-be perfect self as a reality—the only complete reality—and itself the only possible cause of unity of the individual and harmony between inner and outer.

And we go on therefore to recognize that identically the same reality or possible cause of unity is on every one else; and that social harmony will come when we realize this, not as a psychological or metaphysical speculation, but as a simple fact. You and I are one, brother, because you and I are the same—in reality.

This growth of self-consciousness is, I believe, a process actually going on. More than this; it is the one purpose of social life. We have not travelled very far along the road: shall we say that most of us, and most of our social groups, are still roaming backwards and forwards between the first and the second stage? And the dangers increase—of course—as the process advances. In no sense can it be called progress in power or ability—unless we extend these terms far beyond their ordinary meaning. But there is always a strong temptation to distort the development into a development of power—I do not mean in theory, but actually in our practice. We, and our society, stand still in the first stage or at the beginning of the second, only because the temptation to glorify and equip the new-found self is too strong for us. It becomes our idol: and we make it very powerful, very wonderful in its diversity of gifts and abilities, very richly decked with desires and tastes and appetites. At the present day some good

people are falling under the attraction of a new power, possible but not yet actual. Can we not develop some power of the latent self which will extend our range of perception and knowledge? No doubt we can: there doubtless *are* latent powers, and strong desire will perhaps bring them into operation. But that is not progress. It is a side-tracking of the only progressive process. It is dangerous, as all increase of power is dangerous for those who are not quite sure to use it well. And it is not necessary for right development in the direction of the good. No one gets nearer heaven by growing cleverer or more powerful: there is quite good authority for saying that he makes the journey more difficult.

In this one matter, then,—the growth of self-consciousness—we may assert that the human individual is advancing. Nor need we hesitate to say that the advance is really progressive; for it is the cause, as nothing else could be, of better relations between the individual souls who are society. The progress is necessarily slow: so slow that we can hardly say at any point in history 'Here is a real advance'. It is subject to innumerable checks: and the social progress, which is its necessary counterpart and wholly dependent upon it, is held back by every check. But it means *all* progress, or the only progress that has any significance: perhaps we should not expect it to be rapid.

We may now explain, in part, the meaning of that widespread awareness among the units of most societies which is so striking a fact to-day. It must be regarded as at once an effect and a cause of progress in self-consciousness. An effect, since that growth brings with it, and even proceeds by, readier and fuller recognition of the claims of all other selves: fuller consciousness, therefore, of society as a real fraternity of souls, all of whom have the same right to the open door of life. Consequently, every advance which you or I may make in self-consciousness urges us both to invite and to assist all others to make the same advance. It impels us to extend freedom, wherever lack of freedom seems to be an obstacle; to remove ignorance, wherever ignorance is a hindrance; to stimulate thought and reflection and sentiment, wherever indolence of mind or dullness of feeling seems to prevent the awakening. But the awakening on the part of increasing numbers of individuals is also a cause of the growth of self-consciousness in you and me. We may not like to admit it, but we must in



fairness confess that, in all probability, we should not have reached our present stage if we had not had compulsion laid upon us by the insistent claims of those others. The masses—or individuals among them—have forced us to regard them with new eyes, by the very fact of their awakening from the safe apathy of serfdom or semi-serfdom. *Their* assertion of self-consciousness compelled us to widen *our* self-consciousness to the point of including them and recognizing that their selfhood was identical with ours. The process has thus been a double one, of concomitant action and re-action.

And this consideration again bears out my contention that the growth of self-consciousness in the individual, and the awakening of more and more units of society, are both *new* facts. There *could* not be any full growth of self-consciousness so long as the most enlightened minds were allowed to regard slaves as 'animated tools' and the masses as a lower order of being. Advance in self-consciousness was halted, until we realized the full social implications of the discovery that 'I am I'. It is checked to-day, because we are unwilling to follow out the implications to their logical end. The idealist pipes in vain to ears which are deaf in any single particular to the claims of all others.

The progress which has undoubtedly been made is often attributed to the influence of Christianity. But it is easier to assert this than to prove it. The essence of the truth about self and other selves is implicit in Christian doctrine, and was proclaimed by Christ and the early Christians. It was also proclaimed by the Stoics. But nothing happened, outside a very small circle. No social change followed. The truth was not operative as a social force during the centuries of the Church's supremacy. Christianity has always been opposed to oppression in any form; but oppression has not been destroyed, and even slavery was not abolished from Christian practice till within the last hundred years. Christian doctrine, also, has always insisted upon the supreme value of each individual soul. So has Hindu doctrine.<sup>1</sup> But neither the Western nor the Eastern world has shown much social application of the truth—until quite recently. It has needed some other

<sup>1</sup> I do not of course refer to the doctrine of the Atman, of which some developments (as in Buddhism) lead to the negation of individuality; but to the doctrine of the age-long individual soul which re-incarnates in each successive life as 'a separate personality.'

factor to bring into active operation the principles implicit in Christianity and Stoicism, or in Christianity and Hinduism. And that other factor has been the more secular influence of the awakening from lethargy of many who had hitherto been oppressed and slave-like ; and this in turn is due, in great part, to changes imposed upon our social life by recent developments in industry, commerce, and world-contact. I do not mean that the progress itself is therefore traceable to economic causes or to any causes outside the individual souls themselves. There is danger of falling into an easy fallacy here. We saw that desire only becomes operative as an active force when the possibility of its satisfaction is brought within reasonable distance ; and this principle runs through everything. It is the condition which governs the movements of spiritual impulse, just as it governs the movements of desire. Awakening waits upon opportunity ; but the opportunity is not the cause of the awakening. The latent impulse must be present. And the cause of our awakening to better things is the spiritual impulse inherent in the soul itself. Like desire, this impulse may be assumed to be unlimited in range and strength ; but, like desire again, it remains latent (in the great majority of individuals) until opportunity arrives. To say that the combination of circumstances which furnishes the opportunity is the cause of the resultant activity is the fallacy which runs through all materialistic interpretation of history or of conduct. Circumstances are never causal where the soul is concerned. But they are important conditions.

The influence of religion in bringing into activity any part of the spiritual impulse depends entirely upon the reality of the religious faith. If it is real, the impulse will not wait for circumstances or suitable conditions, but will make them by its own force. And if I assert that religion—Christianity or any other—has failed to awaken the impulse during many centuries, I mean only that the religious faith has been too weak for the task ; and I suppose no one will care to dispute this.

Will the growth of self-consciousness continue, now that it has received so great an impetus from the awakening of so many individuals formerly half-asleep ? Who can say ? The awakening is itself a sign that the growth of self-consciousness is now more widespread than it ever was ; but that is not enough. Indeed, this alone means greater dangers ; for we are safer asleep than awake, even when we walk in our sleep.

There is possibility of greater good, if only we can use the power for good and not for evil. I suppose there are to-day many thousands of people, where perhaps there were only tens or hundreds before, who are consciously following ideal purposes, aware of the possible connexion of such purposes with the 'better self' within them, aware too of the need of trying to harmonize those ideal purposes with the general good and with the purposes of all other units. But will they follow out the logical development till harmony is reached? Or will they, and the others who are a little behind them, fall under the lure of greater possible satisfactions for themselves, refuse subordination of the less good to the good, and, still following the desires of the less good self, plunge themselves into deeper disharmony with their competitors who ought to be their comrades?

I have placed side by side the stages of growth of self-consciousness in the individual and the corresponding stages of recognition of the social good, because the two cannot really be separated. The soul is social—all through; <sup>1</sup> it could not exist apart from its medium of other souls, any more than it can exist happily in antagonism to them. Every advance in consciousness of self means similar advance in consciousness of other selves. Inevitably; for all growth means wider and firmer contact with that part of the outer world which forms the medium of growth; and in the growth of our souls, that outer world (or the only important part of it) is the other souls. Throw our roots and branches more widely and firmly *round* them, and we are growing in strength of self-preservation as well as in strength of other-preservation. Throw our roots and branches more strongly *against* them, and we are still growing, perhaps, but perhaps only in strength of self-destruction and other-destruction. This double path is, alas! always open to us. For the growth of self-consciousness is not necessarily socially progressive, in the first stages. It may lead to increase of anti-social feeling rather than to increase of harmony. This is very clear in the first stage, in which, as we have seen, the temptation to increase self-assertion often triumphs over the desire to increase sympathy. It is less clear in the second stage; but here too, the recognition of a general social good, of a better state of society, of a possible ideal, may

<sup>1</sup> The spirit cannot be so regarded. As part of the one Reality, it is super-social, or beyond the reach of social influences.

be, and commonly is, narrowed down into concentration upon the good of *our* society, or the better state of *our* little group, in antagonism to that of other societies or groups. Not until the third stage is reached, and the transcendent good of self-subordination is fully realized, can we say with certainty that the growth of self-consciousness and the progress of society are advancing side by side.

Before closing this long and difficult section, I will, for the sake of clearness, sum up the account of the individual and his environment.

Each may be said to consist of three parts.<sup>1</sup> In the individual there is, first, an outer part, comprising his given equipment of faculties of body and mind, whose limitations determine the range of his effort and attainment, but not the quality or direction of his work or life. There is, secondly, the personal self, with its consciousness of oneness, and its own chosen possession of character and purpose, and its provision, partly given and partly chosen, of thoughts, feelings and aspirations. With its subconsciousness, also ; by which I understand that part of the soul (including its complete memory) which the conditions of our present life have put outside the control of the conscious human personality. And there is, thirdly, the individual spirit, or core of unity, which is indefinable and infinite.

The environment is also threefold. We have, first, our material surroundings, both natural and artificial. We have, secondly, our immaterial equipment—that heritage of civilization which supplies the stuff, the framework, and the implements of our thoughts and purposes. This equipment includes everything given to us in the form of systems of knowledge and speculation, moral and religious codes and standards and creeds, institutions of social order, ways of doing things or social habits, language, literature and arts. And we have, thirdly, the environment of other persons who are our '*socii*'.

The influence of environment upon the member of society is the great difficulty. I have tried to present the only position which seems to me to be compatible with free will. Perhaps I may make this position more clear by using the analogy (but it is only an analogy) of the biological conception of the indi-

<sup>1</sup> I do not pretend to say whether this threefold division, like so many others, has any foundation in fact, or is only a convenient fiction, due perhaps to the fascination of the triad



vidual and his environment. According to this, every normal organism consists of two very different parts: one is plastic, the other not. The former comprises the whole specific equipment of organs and faculties; the latter is the germ-plasm. The former is much the same in all normal individuals, only differing in strength and small individual variations. The latter is by no means the same—except in the children of the same parents. On the former, environment may have almost any effect (for good or for evil), within the limits fixed by the inherited powers of the individual. Each individual has a given ‘range’ of variability, and cannot pass beyond this. But on the germ-plasm, environment has no effect whatever; it may be regarded as unchangeable or unmodifiable.

Similarly in the case of the individual soul. On the outer soul (as described above), environment may have almost any effect, within the limits fixed by the inherited nature and capacities of this outer soul. The true soul, on the other hand, can select its own environment and determine the quality of the environmental influence, subject only to the limitations imposed by the existing environment. Herein it differs entirely from the physical organism. Moreover, the limitations imposed by the environment do not at any time prevent the soul from making good moral use of that environment. Lot was able to keep clean in Sodom, just as John Mill was able to keep fine in a centre of atheism. Further, there is within every soul a spiritual faculty which—like the unalterable germ-plasm—is not at all affected by any environment, and—unlike the germ-plasm—is wholly good. But this faculty may be entirely latent all through our human life (covered up by the mire and mud of worldly interests, as Plato put it), or only operative as an occasional impulse towards apparent forms of good.

Those elements in the soul which really matter are the elements which determine the choice between good and evil in the conduct of life; and the spiritual faculty. These are ours—or rather, they are our very selves; they are not given, in the sense in which our bodies and our outer souls are given by heredity; and they are not at the mercy of environment, in the sense in which body and outer soul are. The one can choose what the quality of environmental effect shall be; the other is independent of environment altogether.

We are now in a position to state rather more fully the requirements of the individual good and of the social good.

There are three questions to be answered : first, what does my happiness require that I shall be ? Secondly, what does my happiness require that my social environment shall be ? Thirdly, what does the good of society require that I shall be ? Of these, the first has already been answered by our initial assumptions. My happiness requires that I shall be glad to work, not because I like work, but because I know that it is necessary for my good, and is a debt owed to all others. This involves the duty and privilege of reciprocity of general social service, and of paying my way. It requires also that I shall be strong in interests, which I can make for myself as well as enjoy. Also, that I shall be strong in affection : which means that I can earn friendship and even make it out of rather unpromising material. Also, that I shall be bound to a chosen ideal—my own—which I have the strength of character to make my chief purpose through life. And finally, that I shall be strong enough in health and capacity to be qualified for all the other requirements.

The second question can now be answered simply. My happiness requires that my social environment shall consist of *socii* or fellow-members who have enough like-mindedness to enable me to feel at home with them, and of whom some at least have that closer affinity of attitude and general set of character which forms the best foundation for friendship.

The third question can also now be answered, though not so simply. Society's good requires that you and I shall be fit for good or happiness ; and that we shall subordinate ourselves willingly to the requirements of social reciprocity. This means in effect that the social good demands in the individual two qualities or characteristics above all others : strength and subordination. Strength stands first among the qualities needed in the individual who is to be happy : strength of affection and of interest, of purpose and of self-control. Willing subordination stands first among the qualities needed in the individual members of a society which is to afford the conditions of happiness.

Two objections will be raised at this point. First, have I not omitted the all-important requisite of freedom ? Secondly, have I not disregarded or slighted the very necessary power of achievement and the cultural environment which it alone can produce ? Both objections are reasonable ; I will try to deal with them as fully as they deserve.

It is, I think, important to remember that the social philosopher is not concerned with freedom in quite the same way as is the political philosopher. The latter is obliged to regard freedom chiefly as absence of restraint or of interference in the pursuit of aims. It is of course never complete ; but its limitations are, on the whole, determined by the necessity of avoiding collisions and friction among the citizens. The underlying idea (as, perhaps, in all politics) is the need of the fullest possible opportunity for self-assertion, in the sense of assertion and pursuit of *my* purposes, whatever they may be. But the social philosopher takes a rather different view. For him, freedom, as a good, is relative to the all-determining good of the individual citizens and of the society of citizens. Subordination is essential to both ; consequently he accepts at once this limitation of freedom. It is conditioned by the necessary subordination of the individual to the common requisites of reciprocity of services, and to the identical needs of each individual in pursuit of his real good. We are not concerned with the demands of the self-asserting ego. The only demands we care about are those which the individual must make in order to pursue the good as already defined. Our freedom may carry with it, without harm, any amount of restraint from the pursuit of unnecessary ends always claimed by the self-asserting ego. But we must be free to choose and make our own interests, to choose and make our own friends, to choose and follow our own ideal purpose—if we can justify it. The social good also requires this freedom, for without it there could be no *willing* subordination, and no willing reciprocity. There is no real antithesis between society's requirements and yours or mine. It is a false philosophy which presents a picture of individuals suffering (whether willingly or unwillingly) from various restraints imposed upon them by their society, and accepted as necessary but unfortunate limitations of their freedom. And this false view results from every tendency to magnify society, to regard it as greater or more important than the individual members,—to regard it, in fact, as anything at all except a mode of relationship of those individuals to one another. If society were a being of any kind, it is probable that it would no more care whether you or I were free than you or I care whether the cells of our body are free. What does it matter, provided they do their work and the whole is healthy ? But the antithesis of society to the individual, which this false conception

generates, together with the false view of freedom which results from it, disappears when we grasp the fact that the individual alone has any reality, and that his freedom is relative to nothing whatever except the requirements of his own good—*which involves the good of his fellows*. If we are conscious of any restraint or limitation, it is for two reasons only : first, because our own aims are not in accordance with our good, but distorted by self-assertion ; secondly, because neither we nor our fellows are trying to realize our good. Hence, of course, conflict and friction—and the need of the policeman. But as we and our fellows move nearer to the good, freedom becomes more complete. In a good society it would be perfect, *because* subordination on the part of all to the good would be perfect. That is what is meant by the true saying that only the good man can be free. In the meantime, we accept the limitations imposed by our own and our fellows' imperfections ; and, just so far as we are in tune with our good or happiness, we laugh, like Epicurus, at the limitations, knowing that, if they now seem to lessen our happiness, they increase our opportunity of preparing ourselves to be fit for happiness.

But the deeper question remains. Has any conception of freedom any validity at all, for beings who are conditioned from beginning to end by the subtle environment in which they must live ? This environment seems to be more than our master. It is the matrix which furnishes us with everything—even our most confident originalities. Does it not mould our thoughts, dictate our aims, supply our standards, and make our minds and purposes ? We do not carve a way or choose a path through life. We only move along a rut channelled for us by the all-determining environment which conditions and qualifies every item in our existence.

This question of our dependence upon environment and of our power over environment must be answered finally, in the light of our analysis of society and civilization and of the individual soul and its freedom. We distinguish three different forms of environment : first, the whole material surroundings, natural and artificial, including everything from climate to dwelling place, from dirt to motor cars ; secondly, the whole immaterial equipment—the inherited cultural furniture and implements—ranging from words and concepts to thought systems and master-pieces of literature, from manners and



customs to creeds and standards, from the simplest formulæ to all science ; and thirdly, our fellow souls, the living agents who surround us.

Now it is important to note that, whatever may be the degree of our dependence upon each kind of environment, there can be no question at all about the relative importance of each kind. As a causal influence, formative of character, the third is, without any possibility of doubt, the most powerful. Consequently we may at once rule out, as shallow and misleading, all assertions that man is made by his circumstances—if by circumstances is meant (as is usually the case) the first, or even the first and second classes of environment. If we are indeed made by *environment*, it is the environing souls who are the chief makers, not the things or even the crystallized thoughts surrounding us. My conviction of the truth of this is borne out by my own experience. I have spent my grown-up life in habitual contact—about equally divided—with those in good surroundings and those in bad. And I do not know which of two things has impressed me most : the astonishing number of really good characters growing in thoroughly disadvantageous circumstances, or the astonishing number of very poor characters growing in thoroughly favourable circumstances.

But the assertion that man is made by his whole environment, including all the individual souls who are at any time in contact with him, is very much harder to deal with. Already we have seen, in the case of John Mill, how plausible it is to say that he was made, in thought and conviction and attitude, by the modes of conception current in the circle in which he lived. I said that the essential man was *not* made or changed by those influences : the futility of his Utilitarianism, the sterility of his philosophy, did not make him any less a good man or any less a wise idealist. But, even if you accept my way of escape from the most rigid form of determinism, you may still argue that what was true of Mill would not be true of ordinary people. And it is ordinary, normal, rather colourless and negative people with whom we have to deal ; that is, ourselves and most of our neighbours. The ordinary individual (like Mill in this) takes his mental colour from his environment, just as he takes his habits and fashions. And for the ordinary individual that mental colour decides his character—as a moral person. We say he can select : but, at the best, he can only select within the range of influences offered to him ; and, at the worst, he



does not select at all, except along the downward path of least resistance. We all kick against the pricks most of the time ; but that is only the struggle of self-assertion against any obstacles. It implies no selection of better in place of worse. A normal child, born and bred wholly in a den of thieves, becomes a thief : there is no alternative. The normal child, born in a saintly family, *may* become something other than a saint, because downward alternatives are offered everywhere to all. But at least he starts on the road to virtue, while the other never even sees it. No assertions about the Mills of the world have any application here. Society's problem is with the normal (and often rather sub-normal) souls, who are not intrinsically strong except in selfishness, nor resolute, except with narrow obstinacy. And the normal souls develop in the direction made most easy for them.

Is there any escape from this form of the dominance of environment ? Have we not exchanged the shallow doctrine of the causal omnipotence of circumstances for the more profound but equally determinist doctrine of the causal omnipotence of the environment of souls ? Are we not still the creatures of environment—though of environment in a deeper sense than that usually taken ?

Well, I do not know whether I can offer a solution of the difficulty acceptable to many. But let us at least note this. If the only really vital environment which dominates us is the environment of our fellow souls, we are in far better case than we should be if we were utterly dependent upon environment in any other sense. For we are in the power of living spiritual forces, like ourselves, not of alien material causes or soulless immaterial influences. We are still in the bondage of determinism, you say. Yes : but of a more hopeful determinism—if indeed hope and determinism can ever go together. For observe that the hopefulness which is so cheerfully tacked on to the doctrine of dependence upon circumstances can be nothing but a chimera. The excellent people who take as their text ' Man is made by his circumstances ' imagine that they can go on to say ' Therefore we can make better men by making better circumstances '. But this is the illogic of simplicity. For your first principle compels you to admit that, if you are made by circumstances, your every thought of betterment, your every impulse to reform, are also made by the circumstances which make the rest of you. You and your reforms alike are the

inevitable product of whatever circumstances may exist ; and God knows whither either may be leading. The reforming schemes of the wisest of you can be nothing more than the reaction of sentient but will-less beings to the sensations engendered by uncontrollable external pressures. But if the environment which makes you and me is not any outside circumstance, but just each other—if you and I are made by all the other you's and I's—then at least we can look our causative influences in the face, argue with them, influence them in turn, and, at the very worst, know that we, as a society of souls, are moving together whither our own souls jointly determine.

But we are not free, you will again object, unless freedom means nothing more than subordination. No ; we are not free—if indeed we, that is, our souls, are nothing more than something developed during this present life out of accidentally furnished potentialities. If that is your conception of the soul, you cannot escape from determinism. But if you will make the bold assumption that your soul is infinitely more than the rather feeble collection of feelings and faculties which equip the human personality, then—though you cannot afford to laugh at circumstances, and still less at the influence of your fellow-men—you can at least say to both ‘ Mould me as you will, I am still outside your reach. I am the fathomless crucible into which all your influences are poured—and transformed. My power to be myself is an original power, existing before your work began, persisting through all your operations. You influence me : yes. But I make the influence mine, using it as I use my daily food of body or mind to create new influences which in turn I give back to you. We are co-operators, partners in growth and change ; bound together, certainly, as every partnership demands, but not the less free because we are linked together ’.

Consider next the question of the process by which we co-operating souls influence the course of our own and each other's development. Taking first the individual's planning of his own life, we must admit that in most cases it is hardly planning at all, but rather a happy-go-lucky movement from one stage to another, as circumstance and opportunity allow, and as the prevailing aims of our own circle suggest. Very few people envisage life as a whole and plan it in accordance with a dominant purpose. But all of us have this in common : our lives

are made up of an infinite succession of decisions or choices between various courses of action. We differ only in the degree in which these decisions are or are not disconnected and fragmentary, or held together and harmonized by an underlying aim. The decisions or choices are in all cases accompanied by some amount of thought and reflection : we make use of whatever knowledge we possess at the moment—knowledge of cause and effect, or relation of the meditated action to our future condition and that of others. But the most reflective people must, I am sure, be aware that knowledge is never the determinant of their decisions in the really big issues of life—and seldom even in the small ones. For, on the one hand, we can never think out the effects of our action ; and, on the other hand, we can never face the problem as a thought problem. We judge it, estimate it, value it, by feeling, not by thought. We approach it with desire already pointed and set in a given direction, with sentiments of like and dislike already prepared to prejudge the issue, with standards of worth already in their place as a biased court of appeal. Most of all do we approach it under the dominance of those impulses which push so hard all through our life, some—like the sex impulse—the natural equipment of our body and brain, some again acquired as a result of habit, imagination and experience. Is it not clear that our decisions—even those upon which we expend most thought—are most truly described as the outcome of our whole character, of the more or less orderly and controlled fabric of desires, impulses, sentiments, standards and ideas, which form the motive power of our will ?

Now there can, I think, be no doubt that the process which obtains in the individual life is also the process which determines the decisions of the social life ; the sole difference being that, in the latter, thought and reflection and knowledge count for much less than in the former. But this conclusion is far too important to be presented so summarily. I must ask you to follow a longer path to its establishment.

Let us take first the function of knowledge in social decisions. You will admit, I am sure, that most well-educated, well-informed, and rather conservative people not only deplore that ‘decision by ignorance’ which seems to be of the essence of democracy, but also harbour a firm belief that adequate knowledge is the only valid qualification for the legislators or rulers or directors of social policy. Let me quote a single example of



this belief, taken from the writings <sup>1</sup> of one who certainly has the right to express himself strongly on the subject of knowledge and ignorance. 'If we were to adopt Plato's Republic and make men of science our guardians, the whole course of legislation would be revolutionized. We seldom realize how far our social policy is antagonistic to the firm convictions of a small but extremely competent class of thinkers—the natural philosophers.' This sentiment, expressed by a very wise man, echoes the conviction of many wise men of all times that an aristocracy of intellect would assuredly guide our society better than any of the forms of government which now bungle the task. The sentiment is certainly in harmony with Plato's attitude, for he was an aristocrat through and through, and hated democracy only a little less than he hated tyranny. But the authority of Plato is nevertheless misquoted in the sentence of Dr. Inge. Plato's Guardians were not legislators at all; they were simple magistrates, whose sole function was to keep inviolate laws and a constitution which might never be altered, and to keep in their right place and at their right work all members of a society from which change and progress were entirely banished.<sup>2</sup> The task of the Guardians, therefore, was to guard Dikaïosune in the State: that is, to see to it that the social aspect of Righteousness—every one doing his right work rightly—was observed to the full. The guardians, however, were not philosophers, nor even wise men, in the Platonic sense; they corresponded to the rational element in the individual soul, whose function it is to be 'reasonable' in the control of the other elements (emotion and desire), and to acquire such knowledge as may be possible in a phenomenal universe. But for law and direction both the Guardians and the individual reason must depend upon a *given* standard of right and a given code of

<sup>1</sup> From *Outspoken Essays*, Second Series, p. 88, by Dean Inge. It is only fair to say that the context of the sentence I have quoted shows that the Dean is, at the moment, thinking chiefly of one aspect only of our social policy—that which depends upon the relative importance attached to Nature or to Nurture. In other words, his reference is to the need of expert legislation in Eugenics, not in all politics. At the same time, his use of the term 'natural philosophers' seems to show that he is willing to give a much wider application to the sentiment.

<sup>2</sup> The Guardians of course carried out the *details* of Plato's Eugenic policy; but they had nothing to do with the establishment of that policy. The Eugenic ordinances were part of the Law given to them by the Ideal Legislator, which must never be altered.

conduct ; they cannot themselves discover the Good : they can only accept its dictates—and obey.

The true Philosopher is on a different plane altogether. He is the man who has reached the point at which the hidden eye within the soul is opened, and this eye, or spiritual faculty, cleansed at last from the mud and mire of worldly pre-occupations, penetrates the other world of Reality, and *sees* the Good and all its immutable Forms. This is not science, but Wisdom, or God-knowledge. It is not science—emphatically not the science which we call natural philosophy—for it belongs to a world which is not natural at all, and its discovery is made, not by reason, but by a faculty which cannot function at all in nature or the phenomenal universe. Even the sciences in which the mind must be trained, as a preparatory exercise, are not sciences as we know them. The Platonic astronomy leaves the actual movements of the visible stars alone, just as his Philosophy carries the soul away from *all* interest in human affairs. The Philosopher may *return* to the cave of change and decay after his vision ; but it is a descent into a world which is no longer his real world.

Now, if anyone, really following Plato, longs for the guidance of modern society by a Philosopher, then I cannot but assent, and say that this would indeed be the ideal government. But—as Plato saw—we are never likely to find more than one or two real Philosophers ; and—again as Plato saw—we should have great difficulty in persuading them to take office. They would assuredly revolutionize our life, for they would be intent only upon putting complexity in its place (which is well out of the way), upon replacing change by the changeless order of the Good, and upon establishing the fixed condition of good living, in which progress by change is no longer thought about because progress by change is no longer possible.

We must therefore interpret Dr. Inge's sentiment anew.<sup>1</sup> What it really seems to suggest is that the men of science or natural philosophers whom we know (but who, according to Plato, are not on the track of real knowledge at all)<sup>2</sup> should be

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps I am reading into Dr. Inge's words a wider meaning than he intends them to bear. (See note on p. 105.) But his words express the opinion of many people, if not of him ; and I therefore venture to use them in the wider application.

<sup>2</sup> See Plato's *Republic*, Book VII. ' So long as a man is trying to study phenomena, I deny that he can really learn anything, because no objects of sense admit of scientific treatment ; and his soul is pointed

given the reins of direction in our not-good, ever-changing, many-sided and pushful life. Is the suggestion a wise or a feasible one?

Before expressing an opinion, we must first distinguish three very different things: practical judgment; science; and wisdom. By practical judgment is meant that kind of intuitive knowledge of the right thing to be done, which is the possession of some able men and women in relation to special fields of activity, and has been the possession of a very few men or women in relation to the wide field of social or collective action. Abraham Lincoln is perhaps as good an example of the latter as one can point to.

By science or scientific knowledge is meant the knowledge of causal connexions based upon careful observation and reasoning, in any part of the field of natural phenomena. The man of science may be altogether a specialist, with knowledge confined to a very small section of the field; or his science may extend to several sections. No one man is familiar with all branches of science; probably to-day no one would claim any considerable knowledge beyond, let us say, a quarter of the field. But a few men possess both a wide scientific knowledge and a power of generalizing and correlating facts which entitles them to be called natural philosophers. Herbert Spencer and Huxley were examples of this class.

By Wisdom is meant intuitive knowledge of reality. This is the possession of those only who have developed the faculty of spiritual vision, and have thus attained to a knowledge which is beyond the scope of reason and scientific observation, and is entirely different from knowledge of cause and effect among the phenomena of nature. It is absolute knowledge, or knowledge of certainties, whereas all scientific knowledge is relative knowledge, or knowledge of changing appearances. The only examples of wisdom which can be given are probably to be found among the great teachers of humanity.

Now it is not to be denied that all three kinds of knowledge have some superficial characteristics in common. You may say, for instance, of the representatives of each kind what has been said of Lincoln: <sup>1</sup> 'I'd tell most people, but I'd ask that

downwards, not upwards.' I have explained the essential difference between science and Philosophy, and also between the Guardians and the Philosopher, in my *Message of Plato*.

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. Drinkwater's Play, *Abraham Lincoln*

man.' That is to say, each is rightly recognized as an authority *within his own province*. The man of practical judgment is the best authority whom we can consult in matters pertaining to these practical affairs which are his dominant interest ; the man of science is the best authority whom we can consult in matters pertaining to the natural processes of body and mind and the whole phenomenal universe ; and the man of wisdom is the only authority whom we could consult (if only we could find him) in matters pertaining to the realities which underlie life and conduct ; that is, in the practical—which is the same thing as the moral—issues of individual and social life.

It is to be noted, further, that the man of practical judgment and the man of wisdom are much more closely allied to one another than to the man of science. For 'wisdom' includes real knowledge of real *values* ; and practical judgment also depends upon intuition of values, though not necessarily real ones. But science is independent of values—except by accident. The man of science does not judge—except when he goes beyond his province ; and his judgment then depends upon assumed values, which he either accepts from others, or (like most of us) builds up on the foundation of his own predilections and purposes. For the only man of science who could be an authority on values would be the representative of a science of ethics ; and there is no such science. Even Huxley, in effect, admitted that, at the last,<sup>1</sup> though Spencer did not.

It may be objected that I am considering values only in the sense of moral values. This is of course true ; but in what other sense have values any significance in relation both to progress and to the guidance of life ? The supreme question is always a question of the rightness of aims or ends ; and of the rightness of the means to those ends in the sense of their justice or fairness, rather than their quality as the easiest or quickest or most successful roads to the ends. It is, I conceive, impossible to dispute this, without reducing all progress to an affair of applied ingenuities leading to greater achievements in the matter of satisfactions which do not satisfy. But even if we extend the meaning of values to include all estimates of things worth while, upon which the world at any time sets the seal of its approval,—such as health or power or wealth—the case is not really altered. The hygienist or medical scientist is no

<sup>1</sup> This, at least, is the conclusion to be drawn from his famous Romanes Lecture at Oxford in 1893.



more an authority on the *real* value of health than the Economist is an authority on the real value of wealth. Each begins by adopting the value assigned by the general consensus of current opinion ; each tends, by concentration upon it, to see deeper or fuller value in it than any non-specialist : that, at any rate, is the case with the hygienist or medical specialist ; but neither is therefore nearer to a true appreciation of the value in the general scheme of values than you or I or any intelligent citizen. If we citizens ardently desire health (as we do), we may make the hygienist our adviser *just so far as his knowledge is true to facts* and not subject to prejudices. If we ardently desire wealth (as we do), we may make the Economist our adviser ; and he too will be a good adviser *just so far as his knowledge is true to facts* and not subject to prejudices. How far the necessary qualification is observed in each case may be left to every one to decide from his own experience. It would not be easy to decide favourably in the case of the economists, who are, even to-day, divided into two opposing camps on the fundamental question of the value of free exchange as contributory to wealth.

It may, however, be urged that there is one department of science into the field of which *general* values may be said to fall : I mean the science of society itself, or sociology. I have been a student of sociology most of my life ; and I readily allow that, in the very diverse departments of that subject, ranging from Ethnology to Civics, much important work has been done. But the scientific part of that work has—of course—been confined to the natural history and natural processes of associated groups of human beings ; outside this, there has been (as in all the sciences closely related to our life) much speculation, much dogmatizing, much confident theorizing about both ends and means. But I have yet to discover any scientific knowledge whatever concerning the *whole* problems, in all their infinite complexity and incessant change, which encompass human and social life. Auguste Comte's vision of human society, shepherded along the path of Order and Progress under the accepted guidance of the scientific sociologist, is far more fanciful to-day than it was a century ago ; more fantastic, indeed, than any Platonic vision of the salvation of society by the Kingly Philosopher. Our intuition or instinct of values, on which *all* our course depends, lies outside all science. We feel our way, you and I and all our fellow-citizens, through the maze of life, hoping

that our touch is kept free from the most fatal errors by the only guide we have—our relative intuition of right or good.

Consequently, when we are urged to entrust our guidance to the men of science, because the men of science *know*, we are forced to reply—What do they know, beyond their own specialisms? Do they know that world of Ideas, the vision of which alone removes all error and ignorance and false estimate of values? Or have they, in virtue of their special science, a surer intuition of life's needs? The claim fails; for science is not wisdom, nor is it even practical judgment. The true man of science does not make the claim. The physicist does not pretend to discover the secret of virtue; the astronomer does not pretend to weigh the mass of good or of evil, or to calculate their force and direction; the mechanician does not pretend to have mastered the art of living well. True, some among them make large claims to wisdom—but only as each of us does, out of the conceit and assurance of his human foolishness. A Spencer may think his world is just stupid because it will not accept him as teacher of morals and politics; a eugenist may think we are all rather wanting in intellect because we will not accept his estimate of values in life. Even these do not claim to know better how to live a good life than any good woman or man in any age. But they think they know the social need: what society must do to be saved. And in making this claim, they either reduce themselves to the level of every confident politician, or else exalt themselves to the level of the seer of truth. For who *can* tell the needs of our social life, except the man of wisdom, the philosopher in Plato's sense of one whose spiritual eye is opened, the purified soul who has seen the Good? Between him and us there is no one, unless here and there a man or woman so habituated to good in his own soul that his instinct (like Lincoln's) is far more likely to be right than ours. Once again we are reduced to the conclusion that it is *we*—the living *socii*—who have to feel our way towards our society's needs, and hope that we too may be enough set upon good to find our impulses right in aim at least.

I have said nothing about the mutually contradictory views held by different men of science, and even by different members of the same scientific specialism. It is a very obvious difficulty in the way of those who urge that we should put our guidance into the hands of the 'extremely competent' little band of scientists. Perhaps the specialism in which Dr. Inge partic-

ularly believes affords as good an example as any. Imagine, if you can, a Nocturnal Council composed of Havelock Ellis, Karl Pearson, Lothrop Stoddart and Dr. Inge, with any other extremely competent eugenists you care to name. What would be their decision—and when would it be reached—on such a burning question as socialistic or particularistic ownership and control of capital? Some are ardent Socialists; some regard Socialism as only a shade less bad than the wilful spread of all the racial poisons put together.<sup>1</sup> Are the medical scientists any more in agreement? Or the physicists, or any other ‘natural philosophers’? Would Darwin and Alfred Russell have made a happy pair of Consuls in charge of the republic? I do not know whether Dr. Inge would include the economists and sociologists in his ‘small but extremely competent class of thinkers’. If so, it is dreadful to think of the internecine struggles which would be necessary before any decision at all could be reached upon any of the burning questions of economic and social policy. The one or two survivors would hardly be in a fit state to guide or govern.

But seriously, is it not high time that our wise men should rid themselves of this travesty of Plato’s ideal? Let us agree, if you like, that, to most of us educated and intelligent people, democracy seems to be the enthronement of ignorance over the head of knowledge; that every election seems to be an insult to our good sense; and that government by the majority of all citizens who are not in asylums or prisons seems to be the final triumph of folly in a mad age. But what is the alternative? The ‘wise man’ of Plato would save us,—the man whose science is moral wisdom, complete intuition of the Good and all the realities which depend from it, or true knowledge of the fundamentals of righteousness. But we have no such man; perhaps we should not trust him if we had. The claim that *our* wise men, the men of science, should fill his place is seen to be ridiculous. Their science does not in any single case include real knowledge of the realities of good. There *is* no science of the eternal verities: there is not even a science of ethics or of politics. In its place we have only wavering rules for individual and social conduct, and guesses at Right which are the theme of

<sup>1</sup> Such a Council, composed only of professed eugenists, would doubtless come to some agreement with regard to a purely eugenic policy. How far their decision could be taken as conclusive is discussed in a later section

endless disputes and squabbles. Our wise men in every field of science are just as much at variance among themselves as are any ignorant citizens. Why not? Where there is no science there can be no proofs, no appeal to evidence, such as will convince every reasoning mind in the field of science. And where there is no science, only opinions are left—*doxae* or dogmata, which may be right by a happy accident, but not otherwise. Among the workers in every field of science, you will find side by side the dogmas of Socialism and of bitter opposition to Socialism, of particularism, with belief in nature's method of struggle and survival, and of anti-particularism, with belief in the supersession of nature's methods by man's sentimental planning. Herein the scientists are not one whit different from you and me, with our dogmas grown in the soil of prejudice—or, more fairly, grown in the soil of all those predilections which make up our life-bias.

We have also, perhaps, our men of practical judgment, or apparent intuition of the right things to be done. But our trouble is that we have passed beyond the stage in which even a Lincoln can help us more than a very little. Social life has become so incredibly complex in the new world, and we so persistently add to its complexity, that no guide can now blaze a trail for us, no practical judgment can feel its way to the light.

Nothing is left for us but Democracy—and the mercy of God. For democracy means falling back upon the common instinct of the whole herd, not because it is right, but because nothing else is right, and that at least has the advantage of being a kind of instinctive pushing onward, and not *mera palpatio*, or sheer groping.

Moreover, Democracy alone is left, for a much deeper reason. If our social life has any purpose at all, that purpose must be the education and unfolding of our souls. No other purpose is really conceivable. When I tried to explain the meaning of the growth of self-consciousness, I asserted that this growth appeared to be the object for which the whole social process existed. That is only another way of saying that we are compelled to live our human, social lives, in order that our souls may be awakened and developed through the development of *other-consciousness*: you may say, if you wish, that we have to learn to realize self by realizing other selves. We saw reason to believe that this growth of self-consciousness is really taking place; and we have now reached that stage in the process



which is marked by great and rapid *extension* of consciousness among the units of all societies. To put it simply, the doors of the upper class-room are being thrown open to all, instead of only to a few. *Every* soul must now try to learn for himself the tremendous lesson of self and other selves, instead of merely having his place and task dictated to him, without any real knowledge of their significance. This is what I mean by the awakening, or the greater awareness, of the masses.

Now, I have never suggested that Democratic government is the best or the only method of conducting the class or of teaching the new lesson. But I suggest that, in the absence of real teachers, we have no other method open to us. There *is* an alternative—but only one ; and we will have none of it. It is to accept the essence of the Platonic ideal—even without the Philosopher King to help us—and order all our doings under the guidance of Religion. Well, that alternative seems to be out of court for the present. Perhaps—who knows?—we shall learn more, even though we learn more slowly, by the much more painful method of pushing self against self, group against group, purpose against purpose, until at last we discover that that way thwarts not one but both of the competitors.

This at least is certain : that modern societies have been thrown into the pit to struggle and fight—with *all* their members clamouring at once for the best that life can give, faced by a riddle which can be answered in one way only : the final recognition that each one's good—in any sense you care to take—can only be found by subordinating it to the good of all others.

No autocracy, no rule by aristocracy even, can teach us all our lesson so surely as we can teach it to one another. The process will doubtless be painful ; but why not ? or how not ? Conflict first ; agreement afterwards : there seems to be no law in social life so sure as this. Suffering first, understanding afterwards ; there is certainly no law in Life's school so sure as this. But the end is worth the conflict and the suffering. And even in our ignorance we have at all times knowledge enough to lessen both conflict and suffering, if we will ; but never by any agency except goodwill ; never by more science or more achievement or more complexity of equipment.



## PART II

### ATTEMPTS TO REALIZE THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE GOOD

#### CHAPTER VI

##### CLASSIFICATION OF METHODS OF REFORM

##### THE BETTER ORDERING OF THE MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

OUR next task is to consider how far progress is quickened, or is likely to be quickened, by various schemes of reform advocated to-day. By progress we mean simply the nearer approach of you and me to the attainment of happiness, together with its indispensable social condition, the improvement of the vital relations between you and me. But first let me try to present in a simple form the conclusions already reached. We have seen that the social good, or our happiness as members of society, depends upon conditions which are normally within the reach of most of us. But even those of us who have accepted and realized those conditions find it more and more difficult to reach the good ; and our societies as wholes are very patently far removed from the attainment of stable happiness. The chief reasons for this may be indicated in this way. Every society may be likened to a very large family living in a spacious house, with room enough for all, though the rooms are badly distributed, and furniture enough for all needs, though the furniture has not all of it the same quality or comfort. But it is not in any way limited : day by day new furniture arrives, embodying new conveniences. The house becomes more crowded with it ; and bickerings arise and increase with every new addition, for nearly every one wants the latest comfort and is inclined to be angry if it is unattainable. The new furniture also gets very much in the way—although the members of the family develop remarkable dexterity in the art of arranging it for use, and of dodging it

when they move about. But the effort occupies more and more of their time and thought ; moreover, they find that there is more cleaning to be done every day. True, no one now sweeps the rooms in the old clumsy ways ; there are automatic devices in abundance ; but the quantity of dust and rubbish grows faster than the ability to deal with it, even with the best appliances.

The peace of the household is also now disturbed very alarmingly by new causes. On the one hand, all the members are growing—growing up and growing older. This means that they are becoming rather more capable of understanding one another ; but it also means that they claim more, need more, desire more, and assert themselves more every day. On the other hand, there are now no limits to the number of self-assertive competitors for the most comfortable places. Until lately it was an understood rule that some three-quarters of the members of the household lived entirely below stairs. But these have now insisted upon their right to share the whole house, and are swarming up from the basement into the drawing-rooms, adding both to the overcrowding and to the competition for comfort. They are quite good people, these upstarts ; but really the upper part of the house was not arranged for them, and—well, there is naturally some bitter feeling engendered. Some—but a very few—of the members formerly in privileged possession are glad to feel that they are no longer living on the heads of their brothers and sisters ; but others—a very large majority—are frankly indignant, and refuse to accept the new conditions of full fraternity.

Moreover, the new-comers are not quite accustomed to the furniture of the upper rooms, and do not always respect its beauty or its value. And its very abundance rather confuses them : they are certainly not good users of it at the first. Nor is it any longer clear how or by whom the ever-increasing work of the house shall be done. Must all share equally now in the sordid tasks of cleaning and scrubbing ?

Of the mental and cultural life of this large household it is hard to predicate anything definite. A ceaseless stream of literature is poured into them ; of new music and new art, also, as well as very new science and speculation. They sample these as best they can ; but they have now little time to ponder over them or digest them or even discuss them, though they chatter much about them. Some—but again a very few—do



more than this : there are always some who are wise enough to shut themselves in the attics part of the time, to give their minds a quiet breathing space. But even those who create the new things of literature or art or science are forced to work hastily, even feverishly, lest another forestall them. And the minds of all tend to become confused and unstable : placidity, serenity, poise—these are not often found. But a host of new evils appears—forms of mental and moral instability, neurosis, distorted taste and desire—all leading to unmeasured evil spreading like a poison through the family.

Yet, in spite of all, the family is rightly buoyant and full of hope ; for deep within the consciousness of all the normal members a growth is going on—is compelled to go on—of fuller recognition of mutual rights, of the claim of the whole family upon each member, as well as of each member upon the whole ; recognition also of the good within each, and of the perfect good, real but latent in the soul of each. They begin to recognize, too, that the good of the whole is a greater thing than the good of each individual member ; greater in this sense, at least, that it takes precedence of every individual good, and is in a very real way the creator and giver of all individual goods, since without its aid no one individual could realize a social good at all. But this recognition tends to be blurred by the immense growth in size of the fraternity : it is very hard to recognize a common good as a causal reality when it means the good of countless unknown individuals, whose very existence is too vague a thing to be grasped clearly by any one consciousness.

I hope this rather crude picture is true enough to facts to serve the purpose for which it is intended. It is meant to throw into clear relief our principal social needs ; and these may now be classified as follows :—

### *I. The Need of Ordering our Material Environment.*

We will not dwell here upon the spiritual reactions of an over-complex environment. More obvious difficulties claim our attention first. To begin with, the care of it is becoming too burdensome to be borne : it absorbs too much of every individual's thought, just as it absorbs too much of society's energy and man-power. On the one hand, we have a mass of ill-adapted or out-grown lumber which even a Hercules could hardly clear away. Consider alone the badness—as well as the hideousness—of great sections of all our older cities, with

the preposterously unfit 'homes' with which they are close-packed. In our own houses (I am speaking of the moderately well-to-do people) some sort of simplifying has at last been forced upon us by the refusal of a servant class to serve any longer as our resident, ever-present cleaners, tidiers and waiters. But the simplification of our civic environment cannot be brought about so naturally. Hence the very legitimate insistence upon the need for housing reform and town-planning. On the other hand, we have an ever-growing stream of new material and new equipment pouring in upon us,—vastly improved appliances, more efficient implements, more convenient devices—all perhaps really progressive and valuable, but very hard to manage in their mass and in their complexity. Moreover, each new invention raises our standard of requirements. We can no longer be content with the old things: we must have the new. And at once we are faced by the twin problems of disposal of the old lumber and adaptation of established things and methods to the new inventions. It becomes clear that we and our ancestors have been both too long-sighted and too short-sighted. We build houses and factories, roads and railways, with the laudable determination that they shall endure for three, four, or five generations. But long before their term of expected usefulness is ended, while they are still sound and serviceable, we discover that they have become obsolete. They are not in line with our new standards: they must go, and be replaced. Hence again new and baffling problems, of transport and road-building, of reconstruction, of traffic control, of the safe-guarding of our lives under the new conditions.

## *II. The Need of Ordering our Social Organization as a Whole.*

The problems here are partly political, and so far, beyond our province. But the social philosopher cannot turn his back upon the tremendous difficulties, daily more apparent, resulting from the mere *size* of the societies which now need to be ordered and controlled as single units. Well may one sigh for the old Greek ideal of a City State limited to twenty-five thousand members! The task of supervising, managing, and controlling our communities of fifty or a hundred million members, even in respect of some few only of their needs and activities, is frankly beyond us. The attempted performance of the task is at once too clumsy, too costly, and too irritating; we have long out-grown the direct paternalism of a privileged

class ; have we not also outgrown control and supervision by any single authority, even that which we choose to set over ourselves ? Central Government is now so vast and so complex that no single citizen's mind can possibly grasp its functions or activities ; they are only partially known even to the expert politician or the much more expert civil servant. More activities are added almost daily ; they are all—nominally—under the direct control of the society and its chosen representatives ; but only by accident, here and there, does that control become real. National elections turn, not on the general excellence or defect of government, but on some one or two particular interests, such as the protection of manufacture, the regulation of prices, or the suppression of the drink traffic. However important each may be, it is but one out of a thousand interests and principles with which the appointed executive will deal, and over which it will have supreme power. Hence the definitely social, as well as political, problems of the division of existing societies into smaller and more manageable units for governmental purposes ; the problem also of devolution of powers ; and, not least, the problem of re-establishing real social control of executives in all departments of governmental action.

### *III. The Need of Ordering the Economic Activities of Society.*

Not unconnected with the last section, though far too important not to require separate treatment, are the difficulties connected with the direction of the industrial activities of the members of society. It may seem unnecessary to expand this aspect of our subject. By many people the whole social problem is resolved into the question of Individualism versus Socialism, or of Socialism versus Syndicalism, or of both versus Communism ; even as by some people the whole political problem is resolved into the question of protection of trade versus freedom of trade. But the social philosopher can hardly accept the gigantic generalizations involved in these descriptions of the social problems. For him, the question at issue is this : Can we—or how can we—so arrange the opportunities for economic activity as to put within the reach of every citizen the power of supporting himself and his immediate dependents satisfactorily by honest work, without any constant sense of injustice, and with a constant incentive to do his best ? That is the economic or industrial problem with which we shall deal.

*IV. The Ordering of Social Activities.*

Here we enter a new field—the province of the policeman, and of endless expansions of the ‘Thou shalt not’s’ by which the paths of social action are defined. It is, in the main, a negative field; existing laws are, with very few exceptions, laws of restraint; proposed reforms are, with even fewer exceptions, prohibitions of activities or habits already established or likely to become established. Only a very bold reformer will now propose, by positive enactments, to dragoon us into doing good or following the right path, for the very simple reason that there is no agreed goodness or rightness of action or path which any existing society could accept without countless alternatives. And this, of course, is as it should be, in the case of any progressive society, whose progress depends upon infinite variety of activities, and the fullest freedom of choice compatible with general safety. But the restraints and prohibitions are limitations of freedom, and each new one must justify itself to the full if it is to be accepted as a necessary part of the right ordering of activity. At present the good citizen has no quarrel with the policeman at the corner: welcomes his presence, in fact, as the embodiment of his own will to prevent disorder and evil. How far the multiplication of prohibitions tends to convert the policeman into an object of dislike, to be avoided or tricked, is a question which we shall have to discuss later. Let it suffice at present to note that reform by prohibitions is not only the oldest method of reform, but is inevitably in high favour whenever the reforming spirit is strong. The good people—and not necessarily the offensively good people—cannot help trying to save their neighbours, in what they believe is the most effective way, from errors or sins whose effects they believe to be pernicious. Hence the multitude of reforms whose object is, by wholesale prohibitions, to protect us from the evil consequences of drink and drugs, of self-indulgences and immoralities, of carelessness, thriftlessness, and neglect of ourselves or of others.

*V. Special Forms of Social Care, Provision, and Control.*

It is convenient to group under a separate heading some of the modes of purposive betterment which many wise people regard as the most important and the most hopeful. Reform by education stands easily first among these; next in order come a number of schemes or proposals whose aim is to lessen



the burden of disease, of ill-health of body and mind, and of general unfitness. All have for their object the raising of the tone—the physical, mental and moral tone—of society. Their importance obviously demands that we shall consider them very carefully ; they will occupy much of our attention in the chapters which follow.

I cannot leave this summary of our present subject-matter without adding a note to explain its complete relevance to our main theme. You will observe that all our ‘ social problems ’, as we call them, are not just problems requiring great ingenuity to solve, nor merely difficulties demanding great determination to overcome. They are far more than this : they are an ever-present barrier between us and our happiness. They block the path for us ; and the better citizens we are, the more insistently do they oppose us. For the good citizen *cannot* be happy so long as his mind is obsessed and his heart oppressed by the constant consciousness of things awry throughout his community. How can he accept and enjoy his work freely, when he must needs think every day of his million brothers who cannot find any work to do, and of more than a million brothers whose work is unfairly oppressive, dangerous, or deadening ? How can he pursue his interests happily, when his thought is never free from the picture of those for whom his interests are an unknown or forbidden world ? Even in his relaxations the cloud follows him. Can he enjoy his travelling, faced always by the knowledge that some two thousand of his fellow-citizens are being maimed, crippled, many even killed, every day of every year, by the accidents—for the most part preventable accidents—of travel and transport ? How again shall he enjoy his friendships and his home-life, when he can never forget that such a home and such leisure and opportunity for the cultivation of friendship, are beyond the reach of half his fellows ? He need feel no such qualms in the glad and free pursuit of his ideal, you say. But once again, is there no uneasiness in the thought that the education, culture and intercourse which have led him to idealism, are denied to every three out of four of his brother-citizens ? And lastly, what of the capacity, physical, mental and moral, which qualifies him for his pursuit of the good ? Can he rid himself of the knowledge that undeserved and preventable incapacity is the lot of many thousands of his fellows, who would be good citizens if they could, but who are handicapped by weakness of body or mind—their heritage

from poor parentage and poor environment? Even the wilful sinners—let us admit that there are many—who create their own handicaps and cripple themselves in the race,—even these add not a little to his burden. For how can any idealist escape the knowledge that the principle—Am I not my brother's keeper?—is the fixed condition of any social idealism whatever?

You will see, therefore, that we are bound to regard all these problems, not as social problems which it is the vague business of society to solve, but as individual and particular and personal tasks put directly in front of you and me, demanding our thought and effort as part of the necessary work upon which our good depends. Would that we could banish the term 'social problems' altogether, and substitute for it 'my and your job, my and your task, as citizens seeking the good'. There is no problem to be solved: the very phrase, appropriate to a mathematician or a chess expert, is almost an insult to the greatness of the citizen's life-work and purpose. We do not live our lives in order to solve anything; there is only one 'problem' before all of us—how to live well, and help others to live well. In that colossal task all reform is bound up.

### *I. The Ordering of the Material Environment.*

It is not necessary to devote more than a little space to the consideration of this section. No one disputes the need of constant effort on the part of all of us to control our material environment—to prevent it from getting out of hand and dominating us or thwarting our purposes or spoiling our lives. No one denies that every successful effort leads to real improvement in the conditions of life for all of us; and this is true whatever may be the aim of the effort, whether to purify the air we breathe, or to cleanse and beautify the streets we live in, or to substitute decent dwellings for the hovels in which many poor people live, or to safeguard machinery in the interest of all who use it or are touched by it. Moreover, there is no principle in dispute—now. There was a time, in England at least, when proposals to protect the factory workers against loss of limbs or of lives by fencing the machinery were met by the plea that such protection was a grandmotherly interference with the rights and liberties of the individual citizen; and the earliest laws on the subject were, in fact, expressly limited in their application to those parts of the machinery among which

women and children moved, leaving the parts with which only men were concerned to be the open field of trial and error (often fatal error) for the responsible male citizens. But the absurdity of such a situation was soon recognized, even by the sternest advocates of liberty in the nineteenth century ; and (not for the first or the last time) high principle was quietly modified to fit in with the obvious needs of life. To-day we do not stop to consider whether or not we may conceivably limit the field of the free citizen's opportunities for learning agility, toughness and insensibility to pain, whenever we are up against any obnoxious tendencies of the environment. We try to alter these, with the very sensible belief that our field for the exercise of the virtues of vigilance and self-reliance is quite extensive enough without them.

But I am bound to confess that the social philosopher is not primarily interested in these improvements ; and I must state and explain this lack of interest quite clearly. To begin with, no amount of improved material environment can rank among the few things needful for our individual or social salvation. They all belong to the class of goods which will inevitably be added unto us if we have or do something else. I do not think the most enthusiastic sanitarian or town-planner or other reformer of environment will really dispute this. It means simply that we can never really get rid of dirt or disorder until most of us feel a genuine passion for cleanliness, just as it means that we can never get rid of bad housing until most of us cannot bear the thought of our neighbours living in sordid tenements. But this—true enough as a fundamental principle—is not quite a full or fair statement of the facts of individual or social behaviour. If I say that no one can be really good unless he is possessed by the will to be good, you will probably feel that you must agree—because you do not quite see on what grounds to disagree. Yet I do not pretend that it is a fair way of presenting the facts. Most of us are good—sometimes ; many of us manage to keep ourselves up to a creditable level of good behaviour most of the time ; but, if we are very honest, we will admit that our dominant motive is very often just the will to be comfortable, or to be well-thought-of, or to keep safe the needed foundations of our family's or our own well-being. It is not a very exalted motive ; but it is serviceable, it does its work quite well, and there is nothing mean or selfish or contemptible about it. So it is with the behaviour of society.

We probably expect too much if we expect any society to be really animated by the will to destroy evil anywhere and in any form or by genuine hatred of dirt and disorder of every kind. But at least a society as a whole must realize that an existing evil is really an evil, and an obstacle to its welfare, if that evil is to be removed ; in other words, there must first be the will, widespread and real, to remove an evil before that evil is likely to disappear. The will to destroy it may be due to some strong desire for some particular form of general satisfaction, or merely to the recognition that the evil in question is a hindrance and a nuisance. There is nothing very fine or good about such a motive : but that is beside the point. What matters is that the will shall exist, with enough strength to operate effectively.

Let me illustrate this from past experience. The slums of London were a disgrace to civilized humanity not only before but long after Edwin Chadwick and Charles Kingsley had laid bare their abomination. But very little was done to lessen the horror of them—except by a few rather powerless philanthropists—until the County Council of London was set up, bringing with it both the power to act collectively, and the definite conception of a better-ordered city as something intrinsically desirable, as well as beneficial. The Council found that the huge slum areas stood in the way of good order everywhere : they impeded the progress of sanitation, complicated and baffled the work of the police, lowered the vitality and work power of citizens, and endangered all by the threat of epidemic disease. The will to abolish them was definitely established ; and the worst slums were at long last abolished.

Or take, for a much more humiliating example, the history of reform of the condition of our prisons. For fifty years John Howard laboured and preached and pleaded, with very little effect, except the conversion to his cause of a few generous souls, like Bentham. But fear did what appeals to conscience and humanity could not do. Gaol fever spread from the prisons to the courts of law, and gripped even the august judges on the bench. *That* woke the sleepy consciences, and generated a real will to reform, so paving the way for the work of Elizabeth Fry and others, and the abolition of the most scandalous of the evils.

It is not necessary to multiply instances. I think every student of social history will agree with me that the story of the



improvement of conditions during the past century and a half illustrates very clearly the following principles :

1. That effective reform is never likely to take place until the community as a whole, or the most powerful part of it, recognizes the existing evil as an obstacle in its path, and is animated by a general determination to abolish it. Individual reformers or groups of reformers, however earnest, can seldom do more than prepare the way for this recognition and the resulting determination.

2. These conditions are seldom fulfilled until the time has arrived when it is possible to effect the reform without serious interference with the dominant activities of society. That is to say, all reforms tend to remain in abeyance until the moment arrives at which they can be carried out without great inconvenience.

Nothing is more amazing to us who look back than the apparently inexplicable and senseless delays in the forward movement of reform. *Why* did it need forty years of agitation before effective measures were taken to protect the lives of little children in factories and mills ? *Why* were the horror and pollution of the London slums left almost untouched for half a century, although the broad facts were known to every intelligent citizen ? Was it because people had little feeling of humanity ? Not so ; it is probably much truer to say that they (like us) could not *allow* themselves to feel deeply until the psychological moment had arrived at which they could also act effectively. The children and women could not be freed so long as industry could not afford to dispense with their overwork. The slums could not be cleansed, until there was an authority powerful enough to tackle so Herculean a task, and wealth enough to pay the bill.

And, if you turn to the present day, you will find the same principle operative. Consider what our descendants will think when they read that, in a single year, in the richest and best equipped and most alive community in the world, seven hundred thousand people are allowed to be seriously injured (over twenty thousand of them killed outright, and many of the rest maimed for life) by accidents due almost entirely to badly controlled traffic. Will they not be inclined to say that the community did not *care* about the suffering of individuals ? Yet that would be unfair—and untrue. We none of us care enough, of course ; but the real reason is different. It is a case

of the factory operatives over again. Given a new industry of extraordinary promise in the way of direct and indirect results : given a new apparatus which seems to increase enormously the power of every one to make more of life : is it not then certain that we shall concentrate our attention upon the full development of that industry and that power, and regard as regrettable accidents its by-product of tragic crippings and killings? We cannot stop them—yet—without checking the progress which we consider essential to our well-being. But as soon as that fear is removed, and both the industry and the increase of power which it gives are fully assured, then we shall doubtless rise up and—at whatever cost—put an end to its ‘regrettable accidents’. The reform may or may not be helped by the discovery of its connexion with the interest of some powerful trade section. At present the chief impulse towards a reform of the appalling disorganization of traffic comes from the very obvious losses and delays imposed by it upon trade of all sorts. It simply does not *pay*. And without being in the least cynical, one may confidently assert that that motive is always one of the most potent factors of the will to reform, just as it brings within reach, as nothing else can, the necessary means for making the reform effective.<sup>1</sup>

It will now, I hope, be clear why the social philosopher is chiefly interested, not in environmental reform as such but in the motives and conditions which lead to it and make it possible. For these are vital, and causal of whatever reform is needed. This does not mean, however, that we are to focus all our attention upon fundamental principles. To care only for fundamentals is, I suspect, a mark of idealism run mad. You cannot find enough of them to inspire healthy thought or animate vigorous action. But to understand our position and our prospects we are bound to connect these, whenever we can, with the causal influences, especially of thought and feeling, upon which they depend ; and that is just my present aim.

<sup>1</sup> I do not want to belittle the work of individual reformers. Some of them have, almost single handed, initiated big improvements of our environment. Garden cities originated, I think, in the scheme persistently advocated, of Ebenezer Howard ; garden suburbs were founded and made realities by one or two individuals, such as George Cadbury and Dame Henrietta Barnett. But observe that these are, as it were, incidental improvements grafted upon the social structure ; they hardly rank with the purgings of the environment or the sweeping away of widespread and deep-seated evils of which I have been speaking.

We will not yield to anyone in our interest in the *circumstances* of material, of place and external environment, of natural or man-made hindrances to the free and healthy movement of life ; but the reform of these circumstances is not a reform which stands alone or can be approached as a single, separate problem. It is bound up with, and really depends upon, the deeper movements of desire, purpose and aspiration from which our activities spring ; and change in these movements is always, and must always be the antecedent condition of any wished-for change of environment.

Consequently, if we find, as we most certainly do find, that the path to happiness is blocked for many people by circumstances of environment which it is within the power of society to remove, we say at once ' Yes : that is true at all times ; perhaps truer to-day than ever before. But you will gain little by charging direct, like a Don Quixote, at the most obvious manifestations of the evil. Trace it to its roots, and discover the interests upon which they thrive—special forms of self-interest, class-interest, trade-interest, or what not. And then show your society that these particular interests are either too costly, in terms of life, to be allowed to endure, or else can be better served in a different way, without the price of suffering now demanded. For thus only can you free your neighbour and yourself from the poison of circumstance which corrodes your happiness.'

But this method, with its implications, clearly carries us beyond the consideration of the ordering of the environment, and must be reserved for later discussion.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BETTER ORDERING OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

#### *II. The Ordering of the Social Structure and Organization.*

1. **B**Y the social organization I understand first, the groupings and combinations of groups which are found in every society ; and secondly, the structure of those groups, and the relationships existing between the members of them. Every civilized society is ' organized ', partly as a result of natural growth, partly as a result of purposive planning, into some sort of whole—a single coherent group—the majority of whose members have much the same sentiments in regard to a number of matters closely affecting their lives. This community of sentiments is the ultimate basis and cause of whatever unity the group possesses. But the common sentiments themselves are never fully definable, any more than are the likes and dislikes of an individual. Moreover, they are in many cases irrational (in this respect also resembling our likes and dislikes) ; but irrational only in this sense, that we acquire many of them without any exercise of critical reasoning, and keep them as part of our life-equipment without ever taking the trouble to ask why we do so, or whether there is any valid reason for doing so.

Among the common sentiments which maintain the organized unity of a society, the most important (and the least rational, in the sense just explained) is the feeling of preference for the type represented by (or imagined by us to be represented by) the majority of our fellow-members. We prefer it to the type represented by the members of any other society ; we prefer also the mentality, the character and general attitude to things, the habits and habitual modes of thought and action, of our fellow-members. We like to live and move among them ; we feel at home with them. This general sentiment of preference is by far the strongest bond of unity, and the strongest element in what we call patriotism ; nor are its



value and importance lessened at all by the fact that it springs from our own personal self-love and self-admiration. I do actually prefer myself (on the whole) to any one else ; naturally therefore I prefer the people who most closely resemble myself to all other people ; and this in spite of the fact that I know and dislike many of my own defects, and know and dislike even more heartily the similar defects of my fellow-citizens.

This sentiment is combined with and strengthened by the rather different feeling of preference for the persons and things (including laws and institutions) to which I am habituated. The influence of *consuetudo*, or being accustomed to anyone or anything, is usually positive, and induces some measure of affection for the person or thing. In some cases (but always normally a minority) familiarity may have an opposite or negative effect : some people in many things, all of us in a few things, are driven into opposition by familiarity : the more constant our contact, the keener our dislike. But when this opposition extends to the greater part of the environment of persons and things in which we have grown up, it is usually a mark either of too great angularity of character, or of a natural originality which may or may not be socially valuable. In either case it is not *normal*, fortunately for the cohesion of society.<sup>1</sup>

These fundamental sentiments of preference or of affection lie behind the unity of every social group, from the nation downwards. They are reinforced by other sentiments, more closely connected with a reasoned view of life ; by self-interest very often, by interest in a common purpose or common activity almost equally often. It is not necessary to enumerate or analyse these ; it is only necessary to bear them in mind when we discuss the effect of the existence of any group and our relation to it upon our happiness.

2. By the structure of society or of any social group I understand the divisions and sub-divisions into which the members are grouped for special purposes, or for the general purpose of orderly activity. All of these sub-groups represent the 'organs' of society, and possess more or less clearly defined functions in relation to the society-group as a whole. No

<sup>1</sup> I cannot here pursue the very fascinating subject of the influence of imitation and opposition in social life. The reader may be referred to the works of Gabriel Tarde on the subject, especially his *Laws of Imitation* and his *Social Laws*—the latter being a summary of his views.

group can be called 'organized', or be said to possess any organization at all, unless its members are thus subdivided into smaller groups. Consequently, if you and I belong to a society, it follows that we also belong to some 'organ' or 'organs' of that society, and share in its particular functions. We are born into membership of some groups—a family, for instance, and perhaps usually a church; we drift into membership of others—often alas! of that very important group or organ which is called our profession or trade or business; and we deliberately choose membership of others. We may belong or be bound to a group permanently: in a society divided strictly into castes or classes a member belongs to the priestly caste or the labouring class or whatever else he has been born into, for the whole of his life. Or we may belong to it for a part of our lives only, and in connexion with some only of our activities. Thus you may be a member of Parliament for a few years, and you may combine with this the membership of a Board of Directors, of a philanthropic or scientific body, or of any similar group for whose activities you have or imagine you have time enough to spare. In modern, advanced societies the whole organization is at once more complex and more plastic than in older, less advanced societies. Consequently membership of sub-groups is less fixed and less limiting; and in this respect at least modern society gives more freedom to the individual.

But it must be remembered that membership of any sub-group imposes upon you and me certain obligations and restrictions—in addition to those imposed by membership of any society as a whole. We must live according to law: we must perform actions and abstain from actions according to prescribed rules: there is no escape from this compulsion, unless we escape from society altogether. No wonder the ideal of Anarchy is attractive, with its proclaimed freedom from all organization, all law, all limitation of activity by rules. But when one adds the inevitable corollary: without any social structure, also: then one becomes doubtful about the practicability of the ideal for human society as we know it.

Let us accept at once the plain fact that all progress in social organization involves increase of compulsion and of restriction for all of us. After all, this is implicit in the fact that individual freedom is of necessity limited by organized social life; and the only problem of freedom worth discussing is just this: How

can you and I live as members of society and parts of its organized structure without resenting its obligations or feeling its restrictions? It is part of this problem which meets us when we ask how far we are hindered in the pursuit of the good by the existing organization of society.

Now I think most of us will acknowledge at once that we find no hindrance at all in our general membership of society, in spite of the fact that this compels our constant submission to a host of laws in the making of which we have had no conscious share. We do, no doubt, rebel from time to time against some item in the code of law and institution which we believe we have outgrown. It is part of our progress to refuse our allegiance to definitions of status or ordinances of conduct which we now feel to be survivals from more primitive days. Thus intelligent women have rebelled against the archaic laws which debased their condition and fettered their activities; just as intelligent working men have rebelled against the medieval restrictions which limited their citizenship and prevented the improvement of their status. But on the whole the normal citizen accepts the accepted code, and feels no hardship. After all, its authority rests upon him, in the last resort; it is just the willing consent of normal citizens which keeps the law enthroned.

Nevertheless, the law, as we have admitted, calls for continual modification, to keep pace with our progress. Can we define the points at which it most needs amendment? In other words, can we say where and why the existing organization of society interferes with our pursuit of the good?

Taking first our work, we must note at once that most of us are not only members of a vast industrial system, but are also tied to some special group within it, and are therefore subject to a code within a code. The great trade unions are only one example of this; nearly every profession has also its union. And some of them (the doctors and lawyers, for instance) are probably more tyrannical than any trade union. In other cases the group has no such explicit constitution or code; but nevertheless its members are at all times subject to the pressure of a body of general opinion and accepted etiquette. Even in commerce this same grouping exists and tends to increase. Stock Exchanges, Corn Exchanges and the like have their binding rules; employers' associations are found in most trades; associations of merchants also, of agents, store-keepers and

retailers—all these are organized into groups, each with its rules and restrictions. Complaints of the tyranny of some of these are common enough ; we hear them most often in reference to the hand-workers' trade unions, perhaps because the chorus of complaint is echoed so very loudly by people who are outside them altogether. But similar complaints are heard of all the other associations : the dissatisfaction of the numerous neo-physicians is a good example.

Now I dare not dogmatize about the rights or wrongs of any group. But it is legitimate to point out a few general facts of much significance. First, it is probably beyond question that the advantages derived from the existence of these groups far outweigh their disadvantages. I think this is proved by the simple fact that they continue to grow in number and in power, by the will and consent of the great majority of the people directly concerned. Wherever any considerable body of unorganized workers still exists (in England at any rate), there you will find among them—whether they are hand-workers or tradespeople or professional men—a strong movement towards association, in imitation of the existing unions and groups. Secondly, it is to be noted that the common conception of such associations, as existing chiefly to safeguard the economic interests of the members, does not give a true indication of their principal functions. They do of course aim at protecting the wage or salary or earnings or profits of the members against attack from without ; but their social value lies perhaps rather in the fact that they both standardize and dignify the work which they protect. It is not easy to overestimate the value of these functions. Very few workers, working as separate units, can set up and keep up a high standard of work which may not on any account be lowered : there is too strong a temptation to work only up to the level of what will pass muster or be just good enough to earn the pay given for it. And even harder is it for workers, without organized association, to endow their work with a confident status of dignity which will be generally accepted by others. For both these purposes, union in definite groups is essential.

And this general industrial grouping is bound to increase, both in extent and in definiteness. Our work is such a big part of our social activity ; and organization within it—giving it a real structure as the condition of stability and orderliness—is as necessary as in every other department of life. In a world in



which all are competitors, and those with the highest assured standard are usually the most successful competitors, we can none of us afford to let our work, or that of others whose profession or trade is the same as ours, depend for its standard upon the haphazard energy or conscientiousness of each individual.

But the group tyranny remains, as a possibility always, as an actuality often. It is one of our biggest problems ; and we shall find it necessary to examine it carefully in due course. But here we may be content to register the fact that there are still many citizens who are prevented from getting their full good out of their daily work because they are either debarred from doing it as they would like to see it done, or are prevented from leaving it to attempt something else which they might do better, or are limited in their choice of method, or even, in some cases, compelled to adopt methods and practices which they believe to be wrong.

Turn next to our interests. Here I think there is a very real grievance which bears heavily upon many citizens, chiefly, if not entirely, because of the nature of their work. But the grievance is not simply that of being condemned to do uninteresting or monotonous work. I have pointed out in an earlier chapter that it is not possible, perhaps not even desirable, that we should be free to choose what work we shall do, any more than it is possible that all work should be interesting to the worker. It is probably a fortunate thing for most people to have their work assigned to them, subject to some reservations to be made in a moment. It is at least certain that, if we all had completely free choice of occupation, few of us could choose really interesting work, for the very simple reason that nine tenths of the work of the world is what most of us must regard as monotonous toil, and the increase of machinery, sub-division, and specialization is always tending to increase the monotony. It is stupid not to admit and face this fact : it is worse than stupid to urge, as many well-meaning people do, that we should revert to hand-work in place of machine work in order to win back the interest of the work itself. The wants of the modern world can only be met by the fullest possible use of the most efficient machinery, with its resulting specialization of workers and limitation of their industry to the performance of ever-recurring tasks. The field for individuality can only exist, for most workers, outside their work.

At the same time, we may bear in mind that monotony of

process is not altogether a disadvantage. Original, independent work may be certainly the pleasantest, but it is also certainly the most tiring form of work ; and every task which calls for constant mental effort and frequent change of the focus of attention is exhausting to most people. I think we often waste our sympathy in this connexion. We forget how few people really like to use their brains for any long period ; we forget how many people would be much more unhappy if they had to think all the time they worked instead of working without any conscious mental effort. And we forget another thing, too. We are apt to assume a *deadening* monotony where it does not exist. A single example will illustrate this. The senior Inspector of Factories in England told me a few years ago that he had picked out what he thought was the most monotonous and soul-destroying occupation he had seen—the sorting of dried peas—and had questioned the oldest of the workers engaged. The latter was a woman who spent all her working days watching an endless stream of peas passing in front of her, her only task being to pick out and reject the defective ones. Did she not find it terribly monotonous ? he asked. The woman looked up, surprised. ‘ Oh no,’ she said, ‘ it’s never monotonous. Why, there are never two peas alike.’

But I suspect that you are feeling what I also feel : that after all we, with our comparatively interesting occupations, have no right to pass judgment one way or the other on the gains or losses of work which we have never had to do. The workers themselves must decide, as they eventually will do. And in the meantime, we may be content to say that so long as any workers *feel* that they are unfairly tied to a life-task which is deadening, and can find no way of escape, so long there exists genuine cause for complaint. Their work is spoiling their interest in life. It is not possible to meet the complaint by offering to all who desire it an alternative of really interesting work. But at least it should be possible for all to find *some* alternative. The difficulty therefore presents itself in this form : Is it possible for the factory worker, with a very monotonous task, or for the dock-labourer, with rather less monotony but much more arduous toil, or for the agricultural labourer, whose work is not monotonous at all, to exchange their work—if they find it deadening—for something more congenial ? Or are they normally tied for life to their tasks and to the mode of life which belongs to them ? If they are so

tied, while more fortunate people are not, then you have a form of industrial and social inequality which is really a hardship. And this question also we must investigate carefully in a subsequent section.

Turning next to the most vital of all the elements in our social good—our friendships and opportunities for friendship—we can affirm at once that no obstacle to our happiness arises from our membership, even our compulsory membership, of any organic group—with one important exception. I may dislike my work, and find little interest in it; but my fellow-workers are usually of the same class and kind as myself; and if they are not, I have abundant opportunities of finding friends in the more open leisure outside my work. Or I may think I have very poor material offered in my neighbour-group or any other more or less organized group in which I find myself; but in most cases change is open to me. I am not bound permanently to the companionship of any one circle.

The sole exception, however, is so important that its influence quite outweighs all other advantages and opportunities. I refer of course to the family, that very compact organic group which is really the matrix of all society. Now the family is, for the young, a group to which they belong willy-nilly. A real hardship, some of them think, even as many of us have thought in our youth. But there can be no door of escape for children, except into some other compulsory group which they might find even less congenial. It is not seriously suggested, even in this age of rather exaggerated respect for the independence of the young, that they should live alone and free from all tutelage. But for us adult citizens, the family is a group of our own making. We are free to choose our mates, within the limits set by our opportunities and abilities; and the fundamental grouping of husband and wife is therefore a perfectly free partnership into which we enter of our own will. It is also a permanent partnership; and therein lies the difficulty. Our 'choice' of partner is really a very blind choice, in most cases. Our eyes are not open at the time; at any rate our vision is obscured and our common sense and critical faculty stupefied, by the form of madness called falling in love. The result is often very tragic: when the contracting partners recover the use of their normal faculties, they may discover that they have been fooled—or rather, have fooled themselves. But law and opinion alike condemn them to abide by their

choice for the rest of their joint lives. Here surely is a clear case for reform, if ever there was one ; and the way out is so very simple. Divorce, quickly and easily granted, will cut the knot which would otherwise bind the two together for life in mutual wretchedness, and will set both free to try again with the lesson of experience to help them.

It is not very surprising that the most progressive nations appear to be moving rapidly towards this simple solution. In the United States of America progress seems to vary from State to State ; at any rate the facilities for divorce vary. At one end of the scale is a State in which no divorces whatever are allowed ; at the other end is a State in which two out of every five marriages are dissolved. In this last State it would seem that matrimony is no longer an institution but an experiment ; and the records appear to show that those who begin experimenting find it hard to stop, and go on experimenting until the likelihood of their ever forming a permanent social group becomes very small. Still, they are set free, as individuals, to seek the happiness which they failed to find in their first union ; and that is all to the good, is it not ?

Well, we are concerned with normal life and normal people ; and the normal condition is that the very great majority of men and women *can* make good as husbands and wives—when they try, and when they know they have to try. There is only one essential condition of happy married life : that each partner shall think chiefly how to make the other happy. But that is to expect too much ; the normal man (and perhaps the normal woman) cannot keep up to that high level of motive all the time. Let us say then that each shall consider the other's happiness equally with his or her own. This does not rise above the admitted requirements of every partnership. Given this condition, there may still be incompatibilities of temper and temperament, of behaviour and taste, even of morals and standards, so great as to seem unbearable. But—normally again—the great social agent of familiarity lends its aid, strengthening the affection which shows signs of wearing thin ; and both mutual interest and mutual interests are reinforced by the constant repetition of experience. There enters—normally once more—the greatest cement of all—the presence of children ; and the group is then not only completed, but bound together by ties beside which greater or less compatibility becomes almost negligible. The final result is probably the greatest



good which social life offers : the consciousness of a permanent and unbreakable friendship, which has been built up by goodwill overcoming great and constant difficulties.

But all through, one condition is assumed, and is really essential ; the certainty on both sides that the union is permanent and unbreakable, and must therefore be made the best of. I do not and cannot believe that, without this certainty, most marriages would win through to the deep friendship which is happily common. From the very beginning the ever-present consciousness that this is a life's work, an endless adventure, in which we must try and try again without any limit,—this consciousness is our sheet-anchor. Take it away, and we very frail mariners are at the mercy of any wind which the desire for change may send ; and no male needs to be told that desire for change is perhaps the most dangerous element in his sex-nature. A second condition is hardly less important, and is, of course, socially vital. If, for reasons of convenience or comfort, husband and wife determine not to complete the group by the addition of children, then clearly they are depriving themselves of half their power to make of their marriage a state of permanent happiness ; and no amount of divorce facilities will lead them nearer to the goal.

Do I imagine that these arguments will have any effect upon the advocates of easy divorce ? I do not. I am quite sure that both they and the ' progressive ' societies which joyfully follow them will go on their way unmoved, and will continue to take short cuts to happiness—until experience drives them back. There is no proof to offer which may convince anyone. I merely state my own conviction and the grounds for it, in the hope that these may suggest fuller thought to a few open-minded people. Nor is the matter one in which practice can be defined and limited by absolute rules—unless indeed one accepts the principle of some religions which place an unalterable veto upon any dissolution of marriage. In most countries divorce is and has for long been allowed in certain defined circumstances, with the general approval of lay opinion. Let us admit that better definition of the justifying circumstances, with considerable extension of the opportunities for divorce, is urgently called for in the interest of fairness as between the sexes. Let us go farther and admit that other justifying circumstances ought to be added to those now admitted as valid grounds for dissolution of marriage. I have no intention of

offering any counter-arguments. But do you not see that such a re-definition of the grounds for divorce differs *toto cælo* from all attempts to make divorce easy in the supposed interests of couples who find it hard to live happily together, and would fain be let off the task they have undertaken? This, and this alone, is the facile downward path which I oppose. And I assert, as a fundamental article of social philosophy which I believe to be incontrovertible, this apparent paradox: that whereas all other groupings and relationships should be made more elastic and more fluid for the sake of the individual's good, the one group and relationship which is at the base of all the rest, must, in the interests of that very same good, be regarded as normally unbreakable and fixed, depending as it does for its highest excellence upon the very difficulties which its fixity forces us to face and overcome.

The effect of group-membership upon the other essentials of the good requires no separate treatment. The aims and purposes and ideals which give significance to our activities are influenced at every point by the environment of persons in which we live, just as our capacities are influenced by the environment of things. How deep and persistent the former influence is has been shown in an earlier chapter. We may, if we choose, nurse a grievance against the nation or church or family into which we were born for having warped our thoughts and aspirations from the start; just as we may nurse a grievance against our ancestors for having handed down to us the particular inheritance of qualities which we possess. But it is a stupid ground of complaint. If I am born and brought up an Englishman, I must accept the fact that I am tied for life to many of the characteristics of an Englishman; I shall not alter that fact even by joining another nation. And if I am born with yellow hair and grey eyes, these also are my equipment as long as they last, and it is waste of time to think how much pleasanter it would have been to be blessed with auburn hair and violet eyes. The only thing worth troubling about is this: what can I now do with my given equipment, whether of temperament or of feature? And, so far as my thoughts and ideals are concerned, power is always mine to change and improve them, provided only I am allowed to choose my friends and move from an uncongenial group to one more in harmony with my desires.

But the grievance of incapacity, physical or mental or moral, is a different matter. We have already seen that such incapacity—quite undeserved—as far as we know—is the lot of many citizens. It is often caused by defects of the physical environment which call urgently for reform. It is caused, too, by evils in the social environment, ranging from the existence of groups which are veritable plague centres, to the existence of dangerous individuals who are allowed to pass on their incapacity to others, either by physical inheritance or by social infection. Here too the purging process is clearly called for ; and this brings me to the next division of the whole subject of the ordering of the social environment.

We have hitherto been considering the normal organization of society by division into groups and sub-groups, and the relation of these to our happiness. This organization is a necessary concomitant of diversity of activities or invention of new activities ; and it ensures orderliness of the activities so devised. Its object is, in fact, to make possible the increase of ordered activity ; and this increase is generally considered the chief element in progress. We have no quarrel with this progress ; if activity is free and orderly, let us have as much of it as we can and let it be as varied as we please. But it brings with it some special difficulties. It may be true—I think it is true—that we naturally *like* orderliness, and long for it in everything. You will notice this very markedly in children, who are always grateful if you introduce order into their play activities. But we also have an innate propensity towards disorder. The schoolboys who really dislike chaos or absence of order in the class-room quite as much as on the cricket field, will nevertheless ‘ get up a rag ’ whenever the master is weak enough to let them. They are not really possessed by devils ; they are only like the rest of us in this, that a germ of disorderliness exists in our natures side by side with the love of order, and sometimes infects us very seriously.

It follows that orderly activity is never safely established in any society : we are always perilously near disorderliness in some form, and the peril is increased by the very freedom and energy and diversity which are such desirable things. And this would be the case, even though all of us were quite good and well-meaning citizens. But every society contains some thoroughly disordered and disorderly souls, and they are a constant menace. Moreover, there is reason to think that their number

grows greater side by side with every increase of 'progress', and at a quicker rate. That is to say, as activity becomes more diversified, and as the whole social organization becomes more complex, an ever-growing number of people tend to drop behind, because their minds are not quite strong enough or elastic enough for the strain, or because they lack the power of purposive adaptation. Some fall behind the moral standard, some fail in mental power; some are criminals, some are only fools or feeble-minded; but all are dangerous.

Finally, the danger of disorder is increased (through nobody's fault) by the simple fact that you cannot increase activity without increasing the risk of knocking against other people. Our progress, therefore, is always tending to destroy its own order by its own advance. Every new outlet of energy needs elbow-room; and there is not enough elbow-room in a modern society.

You see, therefore, that the organization of society includes much more than division into groups for the purpose of providing organs for new activity. There must also be definite organs whose sole purpose is to preserve order, and suppress or reform disorderly elements. And this task becomes enormously more formidable as progress increases; so that an ever-greater group of society's organs, and an ever-greater number of individuals, need to be devoted to the task. This is part of the 'waste' of progress—a gigantic waste, if one considers the number of such protective groups in a modern society and the many thousands of their members. Once more one is driven to admire the simplicity of the ideal of Anarchy, which eliminates all the waste by making every citizen his own policeman, judge, reformer and warder.

But the work must be done; if not, the normal citizen's pursuit of the good will be very effectively thwarted at every turn. The work is assuredly not well done at present. Accidental death and injury are becoming more common; murders and crimes of violence also; and the number of incompetents—especially mental incompetents—grows out of all proportion to the growth of population. Now I do not intend to discuss the cause and cure of this at present. I wish only to dwell upon one aspect of it which is directly connected with the organization of society and of the social environment. It is this: the difficulty of securing order, which means the whole difficulty of government and administration, is intensified, to a degree not yet realized, by the mere *size* of many modern



communities. In the first place, the monstrous size of some societies compels their citizens to attempt an amount of regulation and control which would be considered ludicrously unnecessary in a smaller society ; and in the second place, the complexity resulting from the attempts to organize order on a gigantic scale leads to new disorders due to confusion and overlapping of functions.

Let us consider this matter with the help of simple examples. In a very small social group, an unconscious control of each by all is constantly at work, and is enough to ensure order without any special machinery. In a family you do not need to appoint a policeman to keep order, nor a sanitary officer to compel every one to wash. You may know families in which both functionaries would be an advantage ; but that is only because the group itself is a total failure. Normally, any small group keeps itself in order by the felt pressure of opinion embodying standards of behaviour which tend to rise as the group-activity grows. With expansion, however, the need for organized administration appears, especially for the purpose of protection against anti-social or criminal individuals. But once again, in a small community the black sheep are seen by all, known to all, and subjected to a more or less forcible moral suasion by all ; whereas in a big community they may jostle you in the street or live next door to you, unknown and unsuspected until they injure you. Further, every sort of social evil tends to gravitate together into dangerous aggregates, whose power to harm is much greater than the power of all the separate units composing it. When these aggregates are composed of determined evil-doers, they become organized after the pattern of all legitimate social groups, and so become far more efficient agents of evil. In all big modern societies the highly organized criminal gang is an ever-present danger.

Nor is the suppression of admitted evil-doers, or the control of anti-social and sub-social individuals and groups, the only difficulty which calls for extensive counter-organization in large communities. The control of quite innocent activities is also a growing problem. Activity is continually pushing out into new fields : we all do habitually to-day numerous things which our ancestors never dreamed of—or never dreamed of doing. This of course is equally the case in a small society as in a large one. But note this : it is not usually the activity itself, however new and untried, which causes the danger, but the

number of people engaging in it. You need not trouble about regulation of traffic for a hundred automobiles ; but when there are many thousands, you do well to take some steps. In a small community, a thousand people may go to watch a football match, and need no policeman to keep them in order. But if thirty or forty thousand people go (as is commonly the case in a big community) you will need a hundred policemen to supervise them. And this is true of all activities—in trade and commerce, for instance. There is little danger when a handful strike out in a new line or engage in untried methods. But if thousands do so, then the effects may be dangerous, and control is called for. This seems to be a law of size or number : beyond a certain point a new influence enters in—just as momentum is added by mass. And the danger seems to be caused solely by the size or number. Just as a healthy body can deal with a small number of disease germs and dispose of them without injury, while a larger number will produce disease or death ; so the small number of innovators or experimenters in a small community are usually harmless, while the larger number which is bound to appear in a large community brings with it a new element of danger.

The difficulty is of course increased by the congestion of population in cities. A very simple and primitive mode of living is possible in a village, or in any number of villages, and is quite compatible with health. But in a city it is destructive of life. The reactions are not only multiplied : they acquire a new quality, and nearly always a dangerous quality. In a small community social ills such as unemployment, distress and poverty are seldom difficult to deal with : the problems are manageable, or perhaps they never reach the stage at which they become ‘ problems ’. But in a large community the reverse is the case. The problems become more baffling than they should be by the mere fact of the gravitation of the sufferers to the most crowded centres. It is then no longer possible to depend upon natural and simple remedies, based on the good-will of the more fortunate citizens ; complicated legislative machinery must be devised, costly, clumsy, and perhaps ultimately unsuccessful.

We are therefore prepared to find, as we do in fact find, that in very large modern communities a new trouble has arisen, which makes itself felt in three ways:—

1. The task of keeping society in order, and of keeping the

environment in order, is becoming so complex that no central Government can cope with it at all, and no system of local government can cope with it satisfactorily.

2. The cost—whether reckoned in money raised by taxation, or in labour-power of all kinds withdrawn from industrial production—is becoming too heavy to be borne.

3. The attempt to make orderly the activities of the citizens necessarily introduces a very complicated network of restrictions upon the activities of all, which tends to be felt as a growing burden and irritation.

The cost may perhaps be neutralized, as in the United States of America, by the very great wealth of the people. But when this is the case, it seems probable that another trouble must arise. The richest country in the world appears to be also the greatest sufferer from the crimes induced by wealth—especially rapacity backed by violence or directed by crooked cunning.

The burdensome restrictions cannot, I think, be neutralized or diminished in any way. There may be some unnecessary legislation ; but the cry is ever for more and yet more, and this cry does not rise up only from faddists or meddlesome reformers, but is echoed by every citizen who finds obstacles in his path which only collective action can remove. Remember also that the trouble is by no means entirely caused by the mass of laws and regulations ; it springs in part from the sheer incompatibility of activities in many cases—from the fact that many old and familiar activities simply cannot go on in face of the new ones. I am not forbidden now to take a country walk ; I am only driven off the roads by the rush of the new traffic. There is nothing to prevent me from keeping a dog—except the difficulty of keeping him alive ; but normal dogs do not thrive in an environment of automobiles. The vetoes of the law often do no more than register the new impossibilities or dangers ; I must not complain when I find, in my favourite seaside resort, that I am no longer allowed to take the familiar walks, and that my old bathing cove now wears the forbidding legend ‘ No bathing allowed here ’. Perhaps I must not complain if I am no longer permitted to buy a glass of ale : my little freedom can hardly count beside the good of a compulsorily sobered nation. But the zeal of the reforming idealist may surely go too far in this direction. Freedom really does seem of small account in the eyes of those who are set upon saving me—by law—from tobacco, coffee and tea.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BETTER ORDERING OF THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

**T**O many people it is mere trifling to dwell, as I have dwelt, upon the pros and cons of environmental improvement and alteration of social grouping. Only one thing matters: the economic organization of life, with all the compulsions bound up with it, is the *causa causans* of good or evil, happiness or unhappiness, in our social condition. Millions of lives—three-quarters of almost every population at the least—are stunted by this one cause. Millions of souls are kept below the horizon of happiness, forced to live out their days in a twilight of narrow necessity and unending struggle, by this one influence alone. Poverty is not its worst result, though poverty can close most of the approaches to a satisfactory life, and a poverty which should not and need not exist can poison with its bitterness the very springs of happiness. But the injustice of it all is the deeper evil. The present organization of economic life may open the door of opportunity for this man or for that, but shuts it fast for the great majority. It is mere sophistry to say that there is a ladder in front of every man, which he may climb if he has energy and ability enough. The climbing is competitive, and only a few can get a footing; at the top only a few can stand. If the energy and ability of all were doubled in a day, the relative positions of all would remain unchanged.<sup>1</sup> And the ladders are unfairly set. Some people are born near the top; most are born at a hopeless distance below. The normal, average citizen is fixed for life in his grade along with all his normal, average mates. What ladder is there for the million children of the coal-hewers in the mining villages of Durham or Wales, for the million children of the dock-labourers of the mean streets of Liverpool or of London,

<sup>1</sup> I admit, of course, that such a change would produce other—and very beneficial—results.



for the million children even of the factory hands of Lancashire or of Yorkshire? You know, as I know, that there is only opportunity for one here and one there to rise to a higher grade of work or wage or condition of life. All the rest are enslaved by the economic necessity which has made their parents what they are; all the rest must live the same dull, harsh, and rather sordid life from birth to death.

And to-day a subtler punishment is added—a very Tantalus device, contrived by the march of economic progress itself. The happy things of life—ease and comfort and astonishing luxury—are no longer far off and too shadowy to attract attention; they are now dangled in full reality before the eyes of every toiler, tantalizing his imagination yet never to be grasped, forced upon his notice even, in picture and paper, in street and country road. For the fortunate possessors of wealth, unheeding of the angry discontent they cause, now parade their ease and luxury wherever their automobiles can carry them; and—lest any should miss the sight—a stupid and snobbish Press takes pains to present it, in exaggerated form, to the eyes of the humblest cottager. And this is the suggestion which they are busily driving home, these apostles of luxury: ‘See what good things your toil is providing for others to enjoy. Why have you not the same enjoyment—you, who are the chief creators of it all?’

Do you wonder at the strength of Socialism or of Communism or of Anarchy, you comfortable classes? Why, you yourselves are the constant cause of it; it is you who are the real agitators, not the leaders of revolutionary doctrine whom you revile. *They* could do little without your help. And your efforts to stop the tide are worse than useless—your petty counter-organizations of property defence, your silly sophistries about the priceless value to trade of all your expenditure upon yourselves. For it is not discontent alone which grows, but that far more awful thing—the conviction of unfairness, the growing conviction on the part of the masses that they are being duped.

There is little exaggeration here. This is not the over-coloured picture drawn by fanatical communists or sentiment-ridden socialists; it is the plain statement of facts accepted by thousands of educated, reasonable, thinking men and women in every country. What reply can the social philosopher make? What can *I* reply? Shall I fall back

upon the fact, however true it may be, that happiness has little to do with getting to the top of any ladder of success or wealth? That happiness is often realized more fully in the humble lives of many poor workers than in the strained and cumbered lives of the rich? But that is no answer: I think it is beside the point here. The profound truths taught by Epictetus might influence a Marcus Aurelius, but left the merchants and the masses of Rome untouched. The profound truths taught by Christ animate a few fine souls to-day; but how can they touch a pushing people whose working creed is a determined refusal of the command 'When riches increase, set not your heart upon them'? Just as it is mere hypocrisy to pretend that we are followers of Christ, so it is much worse than hypocrisy to pretend that his deepest teaching about the realities of happiness can be used as a palliation or excuse for our injustice. *Of course* successful seekers of wealth are seldom very happy; *of course* there is often more genuine happiness to be found among their poorer, simpler, less successful neighbours. But what right have we to use that argument in support of any *status quo*? Mere decency forbids it, and orders us to take a different road if we would find some answer to the accusation of the Socialist or the Communist.

There is really only one road open to us: it is the road usually followed by the best defenders of the existing economic system. Let us state their case, and then consider whether the defence is satisfactory.

Modern Society is organized upon an economic basis, with free competition for its dominant principle. This means that economic service determines not only each man's reward, but also his place and grade in the society. Economic service means any service which the community pays for; and the relative worth of all services is settled by the will of the whole community freely and naturally expressed. Each of us is free to perform any service which he thinks the community needs; the community expresses the value to itself of such service by paying a greater or less reward for it. In this way every one's share in the satisfactions available within the community is settled naturally and fairly; services are graded, and the performers of services are graded, according to the values assigned by the whole community of workers.

This system has come into being as the final step in the struggle of human beings to free themselves from all the arbi-

trary and autocratic determinations of place and reward which have invariably obtained in the past. During all the ages preceding the new industrial era, the vast majority of human beings were graded and fixed in their grade by the most tyrannous influences possible—custom, privilege, and force; and their rewards for service were similarly graded and fixed. Many were slaves or serfs; some were nominally free artisans and craftsmen; a few were lords or over-lords. Here and there might be found groups of merchants and master-workers who had won some independence and freedom of activity; but the masses were never free. The modern system has ended all that; it gives freedom of activity to all, and it rewards all in the only way which is not arbitrary—determining what each one's service is worth by the one natural measure, the decision by all of what that service is worth as compared with all other services. Thus the system gives two inestimable boons: freedom of service, and fair valuation of all services. And no other system offers or can offer these two boons; every other system yet proposed involves one or more steps backward towards compulsion and arbitrary injustice.

Incidentally, the system has proved beyond any question that it can and does lead to an enormous increase of the total wealth available for the use of society as a whole. It does indeed 'deliver the goods'; by comparison with it, all preceding systems were failures, and all other suggested systems would equally fail. For it is certain that any check put upon free activity is a check upon all the great factors of economic progress—effort, energy, originality, elasticity, enterprise. The organization of the system is not yet complete: how could it be, after a mere century or so of working? Many anomalies still exist: inherited ownership of landed estates and the power belonging to hereditary rank are prominent examples. But all these are survivals from a bad past; they tend to disappear automatically with the fuller establishment of free economic democracy; they *are* disappearing very rapidly through the influence of taxation and the fuller assertion of democratic power. Dukes really do not count to-day; great landlords are everywhere losing their land; a House of Lords, like the country squires and lords of the manor, exists only as a rather pitiful relic of by-gone authority.

But the system is frankly competitive; and this offends the kind-hearted sentimentalist. Well, let us face this matter of

the unfairness of competition. We may grant at once that competition and unfairness are, in a sense, inseparable. In the natural life of plant and animal competition is universal—and universally unfair. So hideously unfair, indeed, that many thoughtful people have discarded their belief in a divine creation or control of nature for that one reason alone. This does not mean merely that it is unfair that the wolf should continually eat the lamb, or the weeds choke the tender herb, or one tree push its neighbour out of the light of life. It means just that all survival by competition is, in part, a matter of chance, since the competition always consists in struggle against an infinity of changing conditions, whose change is itself a matter of chance. The seed that falls on stony ground has a perfectly valid case against the sower, or the stones, or both ; it is penalized to the death through the carelessness of the one or the fortuitous existence of the other. Civilization mitigates the unfairness of the competitive struggle, but never abolishes it. The most flagrant wolves are restrained ; the sheep have a reasonable degree of safety assured to them. But the fundamental causes of unfairness persist ; there is the same difference of opportunity, the same chance scattering of the seeds of life, the same fortuitous provision of stony ground for some, of good and soft ground for others. Idealists may dream of an equally fair start for all, and equality of opportunity in the race. But the nature which is also the life in each one of us sees to it that we shall not start alike, but burdened with endless inequalities of capacity and of strength ; and the law of nature, which is the condition of all life, sees to it that the infinite complexity and infinite change of environment shall provide unescapable inequalities of opportunity, ranging from a clear path for some to a blank wall of obstacles for others. Consequently, when you say that competition is unfair, your real accusation is different. You mean that life itself is unfair ; and you can abolish the unfairness only by abolishing life. You think you can get rid of life's method—competition. It pleases you to call it bad names, saying that it is the law of death, not of life ; it pleases you to talk of substituting co-operation for competition as the principle of social life. But what do you mean ? We *are* co-operators even now, in our industry as in everything else. Every community is a vast co-operating system ; it could not otherwise be a community. Every factory is a co-operative system, in which employer co-operates with work-



men and they with him. A common interest ensures this : a common interest which all can recognize and by which all our private interests are safeguarded and served. But you want something very different. You ask that the full co-operation of love, of brotherhood, of unity of will, shall be established in human society. You even say that this is possible : do not men work together for a common end, forgetful of self and self-interest, whenever they realize their unity in the presence of a common danger or a common need ? But when *will* you sentimentalists remember that the abnormal and temporary offer no pattern for the normal and permanent ? If the building is in flames, all will work together without thought of individual reward ; a little family of real brothers may work together for years for the sake of each and all ; a small group bound close by intense faith or emotion will be a real brotherhood so long as the faith or the emotion endures. But what has that to do with the possible activities of a modern society ? We are not a brotherhood, and we are not going to be a brotherhood. We do not love our neighbours, and we are not going to love our neighbours, because we cannot love fifty million or one million or even one hundred people. If we can learn to tolerate them all, we do very well. But what you idealists really mean is that you want to *compel* us all to act as brothers, although we are not really brotherly, to establish the activities of brotherhood without the feeling of brotherhood.

Very well ; suppose you have your way. You shall make me work, not for myself but for the good of all ; you shall reward me with a share from the common stock, no greater and no less than all other shares. No doubt it can be done ; but at what cost ? You have now discarded all natural incentives to effort and hard work. You will not allow me to do my best for the sake of my wife and children, nor to win any satisfaction which shall be mine rather than any one else's. The millions of my fellow-citizens do not inspire me with any feeling at all, except a vague goodwill which is hardly strong enough to induce me to give up my ease for an hour or two a week in order to join in some disinterested public work. And then you imagine that I and others like me are going to make industry progressive ! Worse than this, you have discarded the partial fairness of any natural assignment of rewards. After all, a competitive system does reward hard work and ability more than laziness and stupidity, in many or most cases. But your

system rewards nothing. Smith may not even claim that he is doing twice as much work as Jones, with twice the skill, and therefore deserves just a little more than Jones in return. Have you not forgotten that the desire for fairness is deep-seated and very strong, and will assert itself in the face of all compulsions? And that if you really succeed in crushing it, only apathy is left?

The conclusion of the whole matter is just this. For all you critics and would-be reformers of our free competitive system there is only one line of advance: you must join with us in mending the defects of the system, checking its unfairnesses one by one, restraining abuse of power, widening opportunity, using our growing surplus to mitigate misfortune and correct the unkindnesses of chance. But leave alone—for heaven's sake leave alone—the natural foundations of the system: the automatic valuation of services, the automatic reward of service, and the universal incentives to progressive activity of every kind.

This is the individualist's case. Let us now turn to the counter-arguments of his opponents, and consider these in principle though not in detail.

You will have noticed that the individualist makes much of the claim that the competitive industrial society is organized upon the basis of *service*, and is therefore in harmony with the true principle that function must determine organization. This doctrine is implicit in the individualist philosophy of such very different exponents as Herbert Spencer and Bernard Bosanquet. According to these, one of the first duties of the citizen is to earn a livelihood for himself and his immediate dependents: his place among citizens is determined by his performance of this duty. By performing it, moreover, he renders real social service. The life of society depends upon every citizen working for the support of himself and his family group. Also, the worker is never isolated: we are engaged in joint work, and each one's efforts combine with the efforts of others to assist all. Thus, just as social life may be regarded as a system of reciprocal social services, so industrial society may be regarded as a system of reciprocal economic services. This function, then,—the performance of some real economic service—is at the bottom of the whole organization of society; and the grouping of society into grades and classes is decided

primarily by this functioning. The services performed vary in quality and amount and value ; the position and power of the functioners are settled in accordance with the variations. This is in line with the method of all nature : that life and the quality of life shall depend upon the efforts of the separate individuals or the separate family groups.

The philosophers of socialism seize first upon this point. It is perfectly true, they say, that social organization must depend upon function, and the economic function or service is by far the most vital. But the service must be real ; and to-day much of it is not real, but a sham and a delusion. For, owing to private ownership of capital and of land, it has come about that thousands of individuals are allowed to pose as functioners, when they, as individuals, are not performing any service whatever. The owners of city lands or the owners of inherited capital wealth need not perform, and often do not perform, any industrial work at all ; as individual citizens, they are performing no real function ; yet they are allowed to rank among the most important, most powerful, and best rewarded functioners in the community. This fiction of a sham function is the cause of most unfairness. A society built up upon such a fiction can never be healthy and can never be fair. The whole organization is tainted and distorted by this single sham. Not only are power, position and wealth diverted to individuals who perform no commensurate service, but whole classes are similarly exalted and endowed. For through the power conferred by ownership alone, the principal owners have been able so to manipulate the distribution and the rewards of functions as to make the easiest and best-paid work a close field for the members of their class ; and so the fiction of economic service is spread out to protect and justify innumerable functioners who may indeed work, but whose work is rewarded out of all proportion to the average reward of hard work in the lower grades of society. And the effects of the illusion do not end with the professional and business classes. The ownership which masquerades as service is now shared in some small degree by thousands of ' little people ', who by saving and investment have managed to add to the reward of their own work some small share of the reward of some one else's work. In this way the system is immensely strengthened, and its dangers disguised. We may indeed admit that *if* ownership of capital and land became universal and at all evenly divided, the danger

of illusory functioning would disappear ; for in that case every one would be sharing in the rewards of every one else's work, in addition to the separate reward of his own separate and obvious functioning. This is in fact the 'remedy' offered by the defenders of the system ; but no honest observer could claim that we are really moving towards such a consummation. In spite of the downward spread of ownership, the amount owned by the mass of the population remains very small by comparison with the ever-increasing amount owned by a relatively small number of people ; and the resulting unfairnesses are not diminished.<sup>1</sup>

The line of reform is therefore clear. By all means let us accept the philosophy of individualism—the principle that organization must be based upon individual function. But let us make that function *real* in all cases. This can only be done by abolishing the private ownership of capital and land which makes fictitious functioning possible. We shall then have a society which is really built up and graded from top to bottom according to the true principle that economic service determines the place and reward of every citizen. No one shall be able to shirk his function : it shall be real for all. And its rewards shall be real too, graded as far as is possible according to the admitted difficulty of the work and the excellence of its performance and the value of its social results.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is quite unnecessary to exaggerate the evils of capitalism and land-ownership. The acquisition of capital or land by individuals may be perfectly fair and even meritorious. In many cases the man who makes a fortune renders services which are probably worth much more than all his reward ; I have no wish to minimize the value of the work of the Leverhulmes and Henry Fords of the modern world. But that is beside the point. The 'fallacy of function' is the automatic result of accumulated property, however acquired, which continues indefinitely to bring in income to its possessor. If I am living upon the income from inherited wealth, I am a constant example of that fallacy ; and this result remains, whether my ancestors obtained the wealth by fraud or won it as the insufficient reward of magnificent services.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. Tawney and G. D. H. Cole may be mentioned among those who insist most strongly upon organization by function. But they seem to present the principle as something new ; they give the impression that Guild Socialism, by adopting it, would establish itself upon a new basis. This, I am sure, is a mistake. I believe my statement of their position is fairer to the philosophy of individualism.

For their own statement of the matter, the reader may be referred to Tawney's *The Sickness of an Acquisitive Society* and Cole's *Philosophy of Guild Socialism*.



In this way the most acute Socialists turn the tables upon the individualist philosophy, not by denying its fundamental principle, but by accepting it—and then insisting that it shall operate as a reality and not as a sham. And Guild Socialism follows up the principle by building a new social structure upon the basis of true function. Just as each worker has his place in society in virtue of his economic function, so each Guild of workers has and holds its place in society as a group related to other groups, in virtue of its actual production of wealth, the value of its production being determined by a modified competition with all other groups' productions. The whole society is thus consciously and deliberately organized upon the economic function basis, not by any haphazard natural process, but by purposive design. In this way, Socialism removes (in theory, at least) one great cause of the unfairnesses of existing industrial society, namely, the indefinitely prolonged payments to sham functioners.

So far good. But illusory functioning is not the only cause of unfairness at present. Even when the function is real, the rewards are far from being satisfactory. Why this should be the case in a freely competing industrial system requires a little explanation. All payments for work are supposed to be settled by competition. The rewards for service—that is, the direct wages of all real functioners—from a Prime Minister or a banker or an opera star to a docker or a factory hand or a charwoman—are in the long run settled (according to the individualist doctrine) by the natural play of competitive forces. This means that I am worth what I get, not merely because the world actually pays me that amount, but because the value of my service is really determined by a general comparison of values always going on in the world-wide market of free exchange. This result may be expressed in two ways, which are really aspects of the same fact: first, that the payment I get is the correct equivalent of the value of what I produce; secondly, that the payment I get is a fair return for my effort and ability. I will not attempt to criticize the arguments by which these statements are supported, except by remarking that it is extraordinarily difficult to state them without arguing in a circle. It is perhaps safer, therefore, to be content with a simpler statement, namely, that in a free competitive society, fairness of distribution of rewards for work *ought* to result from the very fact of competition. If you think I am getting too

much, you may come and try to do my work or work similar to mine, or you may try to oust me from my place by offering better service ; and if I think I am getting too little, I may change my work for something better rewarded.

But in actual fact, this fair freedom and its ideal results are modified, or even rendered nugatory, by three persistent influences, which we may call shortly Custom, Class Influence, and Luck. A very little reflection shows us that most wages and salaries are protected against fluctuations by the combination of their workers into strong industrial groups. These groups have established a general level of payment for their members which is relatively fixed, and so far guarded against competitive forces. Each group, in fact, manages to exert some economic pull. But this very widespread group-power is not quite what I mean. We must go behind it, and ask why the level of payments differs so greatly from group to group.

Let us take, for example, the agricultural labourers and the miners on the one side, and the first division Civil Servants on the other. The wage level of the former is from one-quarter to one-tenth that of the latter. Why? No question arises here of the comparative *social* value of the services of each. You may, however, urge that the *market* value of the produce turned out by the farm labourers and the miners will not now warrant a higher wage than they are getting, for there is plenty of cheap wheat to be had and the market is glutted with coal. (There is, of course, no such market value to be discovered for the 'produce' of the Civil Servants—fortunately for them.) But this explanation is faulty. Long before cheap corn was allowed into the country, and long before coal was over-produced, the farm labourer and the miner were lowly and ill-paid workers. Their produce has always been essential ; it was then vitally essential, and there was no other source from which it could be obtained. Again, we cannot reach an explanation by comparing the indirect advantages or disadvantages of the work, for this comparison only adds to the difficulty of explaining the difference of reward. You may, however, urge that the work of the farm-hand and the miner requires little ability and no training. I am not very sure about this. The miner needs to be brought up to his work, and the farm labourer needs a rather long apprenticeship if he is to be competent. True, they do not need ten or twelve years of elaborate education in school and university. But if the Civil Servant or other

professional man rests his claim on this, he is on rather doubtful ground. *He* has been fortunate enough to have been able to obtain this education, and the working-class boy has not. But why? Not only because of his superior class-position, but partly also because the so-called Public Schools and older Universities have in the past been diverted from their original purpose and turned into the preserve of the well-to-do—a marked instance of the pull of class-power. When you say that the labourer could not do your work, you are probably right, but it may be only because your ancestors have seen to it that he shall not have a chance of becoming qualified to try. And perhaps you could not do the labourer's work. Shall we fall back upon difference of responsibility? This is a sound enough argument in some cases. I readily grant that many men get and keep well-paid positions because they are ready to shoulder responsibility, and most other people are not. But once again I am puzzled. The shepherd and the cow-man have no mean responsibility, and they shoulder it all the time. And if you turn to other occupations, however well-paid, can you find many which carry with them a greater responsibility than those of an express train engine-driver or a sea captain? Moreover, the former requires at least seven years' training, and the latter much longer—to say nothing of passing some rather difficult examinations. But they are not paid in proportion to the responsibility. Why not?

There is, I think, only one explanation of the *general* phenomena of wage and salary levels. Most occupations inherit from the past a customary grade and scale of reward. Old occupations, such as farm work, are burdened with an heredity going back to old days of serfdom and slavery; *all* 'working-class' occupations inherit the results of a class system: they are the occupations of a 'lower order' and are paid as such. On the other hand, class power and privilege have been able to exert a persistent pull which has raised and kept at a high level the occupations which have been regarded as fit for a gentleman, and have also graded them by reserving most of the opportunities for education to the members of a class. 'Working-class' organizations have perforce accepted the inherited position, and have been content if they can maintain the traditional level of wage, or raise it just a little. The organizations of the higher-grade occupations, such as are found in most professions, also accepted the traditional levels, and entrenched themselves



behind them, often with the protection of the law. And we are thus driven to the conclusion that most rewards of service are very greatly affected, sometimes actually determined, by class influence and by custom.

The element of Luck enters in a different way. I do not wish to make much of the fact that my position as the son of a comfortable professional man, and my east-end neighbour's position as the son of an uncomfortable dock-labourer, are, for each of us, a matter of 'luck', though I confess I cannot see the disgrimed docker carrying his burden without echoing the old saying 'There, but for the grace of God, goes my unworthy self'. Not only so, but when I am told that the humble but very necessary charwoman works (mostly on her hands and knees) for a few pence an hour, because she is one of a nearly unlimited supply of potential charwomen, I cannot refrain from saying that this is just 'hard luck' for her, and not a very sound reason for punishing her. But the luck which enters into the actual apportionment of rewards is something different from this. Every occupation is at the mercy of forces whose movements are part of the world-change for ever going on, and, in detail, are nearly always unpredictable. The forces range in kind and importance from changes of fashion or taste to revolutions of industrial process or of nature-process. The effects may range from some hardship inflicted upon a few artificial-flower makers to the complete destruction of the whole trade of hand-loom weavers. No one now denies the unfairness of unemployment in the mass. Admit that some individuals deserve to be out-of-work; will you say the same about the idle shipyard men or the cotton-operatives on half-time, whose trade happens to have been hard hit, in the one case by an unexpected 'slump' in the carrying trade of the world, in the other, by the even more unexpected ravages of the boll weevil? *All* industry is speculative to-day in a way undreamed of by our ancestors; and the speculative element grows as trade and inventions increase.

Consider a single example of this influence of luck. The reward of an actor or other entertainer of the public is always dependent very largely upon the wealth possessed by the public which is his patron, and upon the size of the public which he can actually reach. Until recently, very definite limits were set to the latter by the actual size of theatres and the possible size of a satisfactory auditorium. But the inventions of



moving photographs and of wireless telegraphy have suddenly turned the whole world into a single audience: there are no limits to the numbers of spectators who at the same time may watch the performance of a Charlie Chaplin, or to the size of the audience which may listen to a Tetrzzini. There is therefore no limit to the amount of reward which any lucky favourite of the public may now receive for his services. It is not his 'worth' which has increased the reward to an absurdly high amount, but the luck of synchronizing with a new invention which multiplies his audience indefinitely. This is but one example of the 'unearned increment' by which payment for service is weighted in scores of cases. And unearned decrements are of course equally common. Nor can it be otherwise, when rewards are determined by the desires or tastes or caprices of unknown millions of people, every one of whom is concerned only with the effect upon himself of the service rendered or the thing supplied, and not at all with the worth of the servant or maker. When competition is really free, then the assessment of values is left to a court quite as cruel and impersonal as nature,—the court of a world-market in which the purchasers are thinking only of the getting the best value for the money they spend.

Now if we consider these queer determinants of the rewards of work, we are driven to conclude that the claim of 'fairness' for the existing system is rather meaningless. I am very ready to admit that the Prime Minister 'earns' his reward—or more; that the very shrewd and hard-working business organizer 'deserves' the income which he gets—or more; and that it is 'fair' for the expert in law or medicine or engineering to receive high fees. But the words 'fairness' and 'desert' lose most of their meaning when I compare my own work and pay with that of the engine-driver or the coal-whipper or the farm labourer; they lose all their meaning for me when I see the hard-working shopkeeper work his harassed way to bankruptcy because of some change of fashion or some chance movement of population; and they change their meaning entirely when I think of the film-star at one extreme, and, at the other, the many thousands of 'workers' who have been robbed of the opportunity to work at all by the unknown movements of the tides of trade.

These interferences with fairness have been admitted by the individualist. How does he propose to remedy them? Let us

consider first the unfairnesses which have been caused by class-power and fixed by custom. The proposed remedy is here very simple: it is just 'more freedom'. Now if this means the abolition of class-privilege and all the hindrances which flow from it, I suppose we are all in hearty agreement. But if it means, as I think it does, the abolition of the trade groups by which competition is modified, then we must say that this is just what is impossible—because it is anti-social. Whatever else we may think about social progress, this at least the followers of Spencer must admit: that it proceeds by ever greater and fuller organization within the society; and progressive organization *means* continual formation of functional groups and increasing complexity within each group, together with clearer definition of group from group. Consequently, the only conceivable direction of social progress is towards a more and more complex system of groups, each of which in turn becomes more highly organized as a distinct system. This again means that each individual member of a group, so far as his life and activities are defined by the particular group-membership, becomes more intimately subordinated to it in his functioning and his reward. It is therefore not 'practical politics' to demand the dissolution of powerful industrial groups, even though they may be said to exercise some tyranny over their members. They are here to stay, as a necessary element of progressive organization; and their ever-continued growth bears out this conclusion. The individualist can justify his opposition to them on one ground only: that they are bad groups, or are not true functional groups. They are certainly imperfect: a trade union which admits some only of the functioners in a trade (the employees), and excludes others (the employers), is obviously in an incomplete stage; and if it exists chiefly to protect the wages of its members, its function is also very incomplete. But equally obviously, it is a true functional group. A union of transport workers is a group based upon the transport function of society: this is the 'organ' which it represents; and though it may be formed in the first instance for the protection of its members' wages, it inevitably finds itself impelled to assume other aims and duties—such as the standardizing of the work of its members, the adjusting of the relations of transport to other forms of function, and so on. In some form or other, unions of workers engaged in the same trade are a necessary part of that increasing 'heterogeneity and

complexity ' which are accepted as a mark of progress ; we cannot do without them.

The Socialist, on the other hand, accepts these industrial groups as a necessary part of the structure of society ; and the Guild Socialist does much more than accept them. He regards them as the very basis of the whole social edifice. Each group is to be completed by the inclusion of *all* the functioners in the trade concerned ; the internal organization of each group is to be perfected, and all the groups are to be related to one another, not merely as a single system, but as *the* system which is society. So far good ; but in the matter of reward for work, it cannot be said that the Guild Socialist gets rid of the unfairness due to custom and class-privilege. Each individual functioner in each trade group is to be paid for his work, and the payments are to be differentiated according to grade. But the existing scale of wages and salaries is accepted as the basis of differentiation, though altered in detail by raising the payment of the lowest grades, and cutting down the salaries of the highest grades. Thus, the existing unfairnesses, though not abolished, are very considerably modified ; and, as the democratic element runs as a decisive factor through all the groups, it is reasonably expected that further modifications would follow in practice. It may fairly be claimed that, if differential payments are to continue, this is all that can be done ; nor would there be much ground for complaint, if the ' lowest ' unskilled worker is always assured of a generous ' maintenance ' payment, and the highest salaried official receives only twice or three times as much.

Turning next to the unfairnesses due to luck, it is obvious that the individualist has no remedy at all. For it is just his ' freedom ' which gives free play to the element of luck. And, again, the proposals of the Guild Socialist compare favourably. He cannot, of course, get rid of the ups and downs caused by changes of fashion or of invention, or by accidents of nature : special workers may still find their specialism superseded ; particular groups may still find their whole function rendered unnecessary. But in each case the loss will be *pooled* among the members of a much larger group, or of the whole society. No worker will be allowed to drop from a wage-earner to an unemployed derelict ; no group will be allowed to be shouldered out of the industrial system altogether. This pooling of both the losses and the gains caused by luck is perhaps the strongest

point in the whole Socialist programme. It is also a logical development of our present accepted methods of mitigating industrial misfortunes by insurance.

So far, then, the policy of Guild Socialism offers a prospect of greater fairness of reward than the free competitive system ever has offered or ever can offer. If this were all, we should have no excuse for not embracing the policy without delay. But the question—At what cost is this greater fairness attained?—is one which the Socialists have never faced squarely; and it is so important that we must needs devote some space to considering it.

I wish to make clear first the following positions, which must be borne in mind in our final judgment of Socialism in all its forms:—

1. That every successful movement towards greater fairness of reward for service must be accompanied by some diminution of total wealth production, or some slowing down of economic progress.

2. That this diminution of wealth production or this retardation of economic progress will be the result, in an increasing degree, of all socialistic reorganization, because the latter aims immediately at some restraint of the economic motives all through society, and ultimately at the substitution of a different set of motives for every kind of activity.

The strength of the existing system lies in the fact that it has really 'delivered the goods'. Whatever we may think about the faulty distribution of the wealth produced, we cannot very well deny that the free system of industry has, in the last 150 years, raised the total wealth production to an amount which our great grandfathers would have thought impossible. Without this increase, most of us could never have come into existence at all, and the small population which might have existed would have been little in advance of eighteenth-century England. Further, it may fairly be claimed that the increase has been directly due to the free scope offered to energy and enterprise, and, most of all, to the energy and enterprise of the 'free lances' of industry, who have planned, organized and schemed in order to satisfy their own ambitions. Some of these have been great adventurers, some have been mere filibusters. A few have been fine men, who thought more of their country's good than of their personal gain; many have been neither good nor bad, but just eager and determined self-



seeking entrepreneurs. But to them all we owe the full development of the machinery and the opportunities for wealth-making which have carried production to its present level. And the individualist has a very strong case when he claims that this freedom of competing activities is a necessary condition of advance, and that every interference with it must hinder evolution and check progress. If you limit the field, you check not only the activities, but the motives to activity upon which progress depends ; if you tie the competitor's hands, they will lose interest in the struggle ; if you forbid them to strive with one another, they will cease to strive at all—and that is the end of progress.

For the plea is true in this sense at least :—All effort depends upon desire for satisfactions—of the stomach, or of the heart, or of the head, or perhaps of the soul. Some measure of satisfaction of each order (but most particularly of the stomachic order) is necessary to life ; and we are ceaselessly impelled to strive to obtain the measure of satisfaction which we think needful for our happiness. There is no other motive to spontaneous effort at all. Now if the means of satisfaction are limited, or not enough to go round in full measure, our striving necessarily takes the form of a competitive struggle, and one man's gain is another man's loss. But if the means of satisfaction are unlimited, or always waiting for every one who strives (like knowledge or beauty), then, though we must still strive, and may strive to beat our neighbours in the race, the striving is not a competitive *struggle*—is not, in fact, competitive in any bad sense at all. We may distinguish the two kinds of competition—the bad kind and the good—by a single *differentia* : in the bad kind we get our satisfaction or reach our goal at the expense of some one else ; in the good kind, we try to reach our goal as quickly as possible, but we are not injured at all if other people reach it first, nor can we injure any one by arriving quickly ourselves. For the bad kind of competition we should do well to adopt the Greek term which may be translated 'over-reaching', or perhaps more exactly, 'grabbing for more'. The greatest of Greek idealists, Plato, had no hesitation in ruling this kind of competition out of the good life altogether, leaving the good man to be motivated only by desire for the satisfactions which have no limit—knowledge of truth, appreciation of beauty, and the like. For the good kind of competition, we may keep the term 'rivalry'.

Clearly, both kinds of competition are 'natural', even as the desires which urge us to them are natural. Clearly also we may stop the 'grabbing for more' at the expense of other people in regard to some or all of the satisfactions which are not unlimited, exactly as such competition is now stopped at times of great scarcity or danger. Or we may limit the grabbing to certain classes of satisfaction, while forbidding it in all other cases; or we may confine it within general limits, by some general rule of 'Thus far and no farther'. There is nothing impossible nor 'against nature' in any of these alternatives.

But how do the different interferences affect the motive to effort? The desire for satisfactions of every order is quite unlimited. This does not mean that no one can ever get enough to eat; it means simply that imagination, in any one alive, is always opening up new vistas of possible satisfaction. You may satisfy everybody's desire for bread and butter; but there is always cake in the distance. You may provide every human being with an automobile; but I now want a flying-machine. It is inconceivable that we should ever reach a stage in which no added satisfaction is desired by any of us. This is why economic progress can never be finished: it is an endless process—unless it is checked by compulsion. And it goes on in response to desire fed by imagination, leading to effort unchecked by compulsion.

But if you check the effort by any forcible limitation of activity, it is clear that the natural process (which we call progress) is stopped or retarded—unless you supply some new motive force. The Communist (who is at present quite distinct from the Socialist) assumes the emergence or rapid growth of new motives to effort, the chief among which are strong altruistic feeling and love of work for its own sake. The latter motive may be dismissed at once; it is plainly the dream of a visionary who cannot visualize the long hours and days and years of rather dull toil which form the economic duty of nine-tenths of humanity. The former motive must be examined later. The Socialist, on the other hand, with a more robust common sense, preserves the motives which are now operative in the form of differential rewards for work, but confines the differences within reasonable limits. No wage is to fall below the amount which a decent citizen *must* spend to maintain a wholesome life; no salary is to rise above an amount which a good citizen *can* spend on himself without obvious waste.

Within these limits, variations are apparently to be determined, in part by the existing customary gradings of industry, in part by public opinion or the vote of the guild members, in part too by competitive tests. Thus, in any established branch of industry, the ordinary unskilled labourers would receive the lowest wage ; the gangers and foremen (all democratically elected) would receive a little more ; the more skilled workers would be paid at a rather higher rate ; designers, organizers, and specially skilled men, at a still higher rate ; and the responsible captain of the whole team would receive a salary very much in excess of the lowest rate of pay.

It is quite beyond my present scope to consider whether such a system of rewards—in part arbitrary, in part democratically determined, and in part competitive—is likely to work satisfactorily. I am considering only the effect of the system upon the motives to effort ; and in this matter it is clear that Socialism has an immense advantage over Communism. It is reasonable to claim, also, that, in many ways, it has an advantage over the existing system of ‘ free ’ competitive industry. No one can deny that the will to work well is checked in countless instances to-day by the consciousness on the part of workers that much of their work simply has the effect of enriching a single autocratic boss or a group of functionless capital owners. Remove this check upon the will, and the result is likely to be a better, because a more willing, worker. Further, it is probable that, in a socialized Guild industry, the good form of competition which I have called rivalry would supplant much of the bad form of competition which must be called grabbing. Within each Guild, any or every group or factory might, and probably would, try to excel the others in annual output and improved quality of goods ; and each Guild might, and perhaps would, try to show a similar progress as compared with other Guilds. In all cases, there would be some reward in the shape of an increased dividend for the most successful groups ; but this would be small, and the earning of it would not diminish any one else’s reward. Nor would it be the chief incentive to better work ; the team spirit, the desire of the group to excel and to win an honourable place in the industry or in the society of industries, might act as an even stronger motive. This method of stimulating the motives to work is certainly, on the face of it, an improvement upon the rather crude methods in force in industry to-day ; and there is no reason

why the output of all factories should not be as great as it now is. So far, then, as ordinary factory production is concerned, diminution of wealth, if it resulted at all, would probably be caused by the fact that all workers in the lowest grades (and the number would include a great many people of sub-normal capacity) would be sure of their maintenance pay, and would be in no danger of being turned out of the Guild so long as they kept up a moderate level of output. It is just these workers who are least affected by the desire to excel or the motives of rivalry, as distinct from the desire to get more, or the acquisitive motives.

But in one respect at least even the very best Socialist system must involve a very heavy loss in wealth production. The Guild Socialist—and indeed every Socialist and Communist—appears to be unable to visualize the world of industry as anything more than a vast collection of orderly factories turning out methodically each its own due quota of goods. But the progressive industrial world consists of factories—and a vast network of other intermingled operations most of which cannot possibly be forced into any factory mould at all. However liberally you stretch your definition of a factory, you cannot bring under it all the activities of the City of London or the City of New York; nor—and this is more important—can you possibly include, as part of a well-conducted Socialist organization, the independent activities of the great wealth-makers, who have done great things just because they have been under no group dictation. With regard to the City of London, you may no doubt retort that the Mark Lane merchants would be incorporated in the wheat distributive Guild; the Mincing Lane tea importers in some other distributive Guild, and so on. But by the very fact of this incorporation you destroy their quality as ‘enterprisers’. You are harnessing a racehorse in a team of draft horses, and expecting him to maintain his racing speed. Moreover, if you will turn your eyes from the exclusive contemplation of ‘the world of labour’, and consider a little the world of trade and business, you will find that many of the most useful functioners therein are far too complex to fit into any single Guild. They touch distribution and production at a thousand points; and the value of their functioning lies in the fact that they are ready and able to concentrate their attention upon one department to-day and a different department to-morrow. You think that you could utilize them in a Socialist



industry ; and you point, perhaps, to some similar functioners now at work in the Co-operative Wholesales. But—putting aside the fact that these are really capitalistic enterprises, although managed by elected directors from the local stores—you do *not* get the same functioning in them ; you only get a limited and restrained form of it, less progressive because it is restrained.

Turning to the graver loss—the consequence of the impossibility of including in any Socialist scheme the biggest and most daring innovators—you are not likely to deny that you have no room for a Strathcona or a Pirrie or a Carnegie, a Leverhulme or a Ford or even a Selfridge. And a good thing too, perhaps you say. Well, you may think what you please of the social or the moral worth of such men. You may urge (with reason) that the rewards which some of them win for themselves are simply monstrous, and that the private ownership of such wealth is dangerous and often harmful. But no fair student of recent industrial development can deny their economic value : it is hardly possible to overestimate the influence of men like these upon the totality of wealth production. But Socialism cannot admit them anywhere ; nor indeed can it admit any of the freelances whose daring opens up new avenues of wealth. I do not mean that the big rewards will no longer be allowed : that by itself would be an advantage. I mean that the independent autocracy and power to experiment with materials and with workers cannot exist in the Socialist State. Socialists may talk about the encouragement of inventiveness and the improvement of organization. No doubt there would be a great deal of quiet invention and research, and much cutting down of the waste of competition. But these gentle improvements would probably not do much more than keep pace with the ever-growing expensiveness of all democratically managed business. What would be completely lacking would be the dynamic individual forces which cause the jumps of economic progress ; for these cannot come into play at all unless the individuals in whom they reside are free to operate independently of the chains of real democratic control.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered always (as Dr. Shadwell has pointed out), that Marx's analogy between an orchestra of musical performers and a modern industrial unit is defective. The organizer or entrepreneur of a big business is much more than a conductor of the performers. He is also the composer of the music ; and a composer cannot be subjected to the same restraints as the conductor.

Thus the Socialist gets rid of many of the unfairnesses due to luck, the rewards and the losses alike,—at a cost. And the cost follows from the very fact that he lessens unfairness by closing the whole field in which the element of luck chiefly operates. For that, as we have seen, is the field in which the biggest factors of industrial progress are generated. He has no room left for the real experimenter, who dares great things because he is allowed to dare them, uncontrolled and unsupervised. He has no room even for the hosts of little innovators, who see a chance and take it boldly, because they know that success holds out great rewards. And it is no answer to say that we dislike these people, and believe we should be better off without them. They have made and are still making the industrial expansion of the world.

This probable loss of wealth may be considered from a rather different angle. The limitation of incomes within reasonable limits—let us say, a minimum of £400 and a maximum of £2,000—would certainly be a gain to society in two ways at least: it would rule out the grossest forms of unfairness, with all their resulting envy and bitterness; and it would remove the senseless waste which is inseparable from the spending of a big income.<sup>1</sup> So far, good. But when the Socialist maintains that the able men who now strive to increase their wealth without any limit will work just as hard to reach and keep the highest permitted income of £2,000, he forgets one peculiarity of the modern wealth-seeker. The desire for more wealth which now animates the most successful, energetic and determined leaders in trade or industry is not the desire for more satisfactions in the way of comfort, or enjoyment; it is rather the desire to excel and to demonstrate their excellence; and this desire can most easily be satisfied by the possession of conspicuous wealth which allows very conspicuous expenditure. Most of the big men in the industrial world care very little about the food and clothing and general equipment which money can buy; but they care a great deal (and their wives care a great deal) for the magnificence with which they can cause themselves to shine through the agency of great wealth. This satisfaction is put out of court in a Socialist society. You may reach the highest level permitted, but there you must

<sup>1</sup> I refuse to admit the social value, *now*, of the spending of big incomes. Society *can*, and increasingly *does*, get all the best results by communal expenditure.

stop ; no effort or energy or ability will raise you to any higher 'excellence'. Like the top-grade Civil Servant, you have reached the limit ; there is nothing left you to do—except stay there.

I am aware that Socialists will not admit the force of this argument. They insist that the best men are hardly influenced at all by the magnitude of the rewards which may be won by their work ; such men forget the reward altogether in the interest of the work, the passion for good work, and the desire to beat the past. They point to the devotion of many Civil Servants in the top rank, whose efforts are not in the least relaxed when they have no higher point to which to rise. This is true enough, in many cases. It is true in every grade—right down to the lowest—that the best workers, who have formed the habit of work and have learned to take pride in their work, put all their heart into it with little thought of any rising money-reward. It is true of the best domestic servants, the best agricultural workers, the best artisans, as well as the best Civil Servants. But the fact is not quite relevant. All of these are quite unlike the ambitious wealth-makers, who do not carry on the work of the world, but rather create work which others may carry on. And the achievements of the wealth-makers are different from the achievements of the Civil Servant, even as their motives are different. The devoted Civil Servant has his job defined for him, often a very complex and difficult one ; the ambitious wealth-maker defines his own job within no limits except those of his own ambition, which is often limitless. If the Socialist thinks it will make no difference to his efforts when his ambition is confined within strict limits, then the Socialist does not know his man. He is probably making the common mistake of judging him by himself. It is (in this respect) rather a misfortune that so many leading Socialists are at once so industrious and so disinterested : one could not imagine a Mr. Sidney Webb working any harder than he does, whatever reward might be offered.

And this explains a fact which most Socialists are not yet ready to admit. They are really counting upon the emergence of new motives to effort in place of the usual desire for more economic satisfactions. They are quite well aware that when a strong desire is restrained from seeking its full satisfaction freely, one of two things happens. Either the desire gathers strength under the restraint and eventually breaks out in other



ways, or else it is discouraged and the energy behind it is transferred to other desires. Now it is the boast of Socialists that in their State the rather mad desire for more and more of the purchaseable satisfactions which we call wealth will be both restrained and diminished ; in fact, this is rightly held out as one of the excellences of a Socialist society. But in its place—what ? An equally keen desire to work at wealth-production in order to increase other people's wealth ? This is what the Socialist lets us believe, knowing our dominant desire for wealth. But the real result would be very different. What would happen would be a transference of *interest*, on the part of the best people, *to other things than wealth*. In other words, the most perfectly 'socialized' workers, in whom the desire for increased wealth had died down, would concentrate their interest, not on wealth increase at all, but on the increase of other kinds of 'goods'—literary, artistic, scientific, perhaps even spiritual. An excellent change, you say ? Doubtless ; but we cannot have it both ways. If you can get your community to care for the satisfactions which are really worth while, you must not expect it to lead the world in wealth-production, or even to keep up with nations whose people are still animated chiefly by the desire for more and more wealth. It will be poorer—in wealth—as it becomes richer—in life.

And this leads us to a much more far-reaching criticism. Hitherto, I have considered the most plausible Socialistic proposals, differentiating these sharply from Communistic schemes. There is this vital difference : Socialism abolishes private ownership and use of production goods (capital), but *not* private ownership and use of consumption goods, if earned ; but Communism abolishes both. Socialism preserves differences of reward (within limits) for different economic services ; but Communism allows no such differences. This has, I think, been the strongest point in all Socialism. It does *not* pretend that all economic services are equal, nor does it pretend that it is fair for all to be equally rewarded. But I am doubtful whether or how far Socialism can any longer claim to hold this far more plausible position. For we now find that the best-known exponent of Guild Socialism and the best-known exponent of Fabian Socialism declare their agreement on just this one point—that *all* payment for economic service is fundamentally wrong and should be abolished. It appears to be almost the only big principle upon which they are agreed ; and it is a



very big one. It means that they are really Communists at heart, holding quite definitely the conviction that all citizens should be paid equally, and that their equal rewards must accrue to them, not at all because they are workers, but simply because they are citizens. Incidentally, it is not clear how this harmonizes with the Guild Socialist philosophy that industrial function is the one basis of social organization and grading. But, leaving aside this difficulty, it is clear that we are now asked to judge and approve both Fabian Socialism and Guild Socialism as forms of definitely communistic policy, both alike having abandoned all pretence of approving the principle of payment for service rendered or for work done—or for anything else whatever except the simple fact of *being* a member of society.

We see, then, that the Socialist, like the Communist, intends to cut the knot of all the difficulties of economic unfairness with a very large knife. There shall be no more complaints about unfair payments for work, because no worker shall be paid anything at all. The solution has the merit of simplicity. But what does it mean? Clearly this—since there is no alternative meaning: All the economic motives are to be wiped out completely, and the world's work is to proceed upon a different set of motives altogether. None of us is to work for a reward of any kind; the old process of 'desire leading to effort leading to satisfaction' is to be superseded by a new process which can only be described in the terms 'no particular desire leading to effort leading to no particular satisfaction'. This is not a travesty. Desire for personal satisfaction is not to be allowed to lead by any path of effort to any personal reward in the way of satisfaction—so far as economic goods are concerned. Consequently, not only is the desire for economic satisfactions to die of inanition, but the *interest* in economic satisfactions is also to die—of atrophy. This is exactly the aim of the Russian Communism. And even in Russia it is admitted that the death of this desire and of this interest can only be brought about by brute force, and slowly; and further, the Russians realize that they will need a vast mass of 'uncommunized' peasants and labourers to do the fundamental work for them.

We are, in fact, led round to Plato's Communism—with all the Platonism left out. There is to be a class of citizens who shall have no wealth, want no wealth, take no interest in wealth, but live entirely for other things. But their physical

needs shall be supplied by a lower class of functionaries who shall go on desiring wealth and working for rewards of wealth, and so keep the select Communist society alive. *Without them it could not live*—for Plato was wise enough to see that economic activities must dwindle and die away if the economic interest is replaced by other interests.

Is this also the ideal of Guild Socialists? Apparently not, for if so their elaboration of industrial Guilds embracing *all* citizens would be only a pretty picture intended to attract the imagination and nothing more. They clearly expect all citizens to be economic workers, working keenly and well, in spite of the loss of economic motive. Then with what motives will they work? Since they are no longer to desire any personal economic gain for their work, they must desire something else. Is it to be the *general* gain? Or is it to be some form of personal satisfaction not connected with gain? The latter seems to be the dream of many Guild Socialists. Following William Morris, and inspired by the same visions of a nation of handicraftsmen absorbed in artistic work, they at least suggest that the Guild worker will find his satisfaction in work because he is an artist and because he can so satisfy his creative impulse. I have elsewhere asserted—and I think every fair observer will agree—that this suggestion is both deceptive and cruel. If the modern world is to maintain anything like its present standard of comforts and conveniences, it must do its work by machinery, accompanied by all the specializations and subdivisions which obtain at present. If the workers can find an artistic satisfaction or can satisfy their creative impulses by manipulating and guiding machinery to turn out masses of goods, so much the better. If they cannot do so, then they must just do their jobs, and fulfil themselves as artists and creators elsewhere. (Incidentally, this is no hardship for most of us.) The work of the world never has been, and is never likely to be, anything except a rather hard, dull and monotonous process of getting things done which must be done if we are to enjoy the results. Most of it has never yet offered, and is never likely to offer, any scope for artistry; and most of it is only creative in the sense that all activity is creative if it has any tangible result at all. And the simple fact is that most of us are not artists and are not likely to become artists. What we want (if we are worth anything) is to do our job and get it done properly, for the sake of the results. We want to be quite sure that the result is

worth while : that there is no deception about it : that it really fits in fairly with the sum total of goods which constitutes the general satisfaction, and that it is related fairly to the sum total of satisfactions which we, as workers, are entitled to. Grant this, and we will fulfil ourselves as workers by shovelling dirt or moving sacks or tending machines or adding figures at a desk.

The blunt fact is that the arts and crafts votaries, who follow Ruskin and Morris, are (like their leaders) looking only at one corner of the picture. It is perfectly true that many people will not be happy unless they can be designers and makers of things. Very well. Let them form their ' Guild of Handicraft ' or their ' Earthly Paradise ', ' living its own life on communal and co-operative lines ' ; but let them do it thoroughly. Let them above all produce their own eggs and bacon—cleaning out the pigsties and the hen-houses ; let them clear away their own sewage too, dig their own land, hew their own coal, and do all the other slightly inartistic work which a co-operative community requires. They need not be afraid of the task, for many inartistic people would gladly join them. I certainly would, for one ; and, being quite incapable of designing even a saucepan, I would undertake the pigsty cleaning, at which I am fairly expert. And I think we would all find happiness in all our work. But, in the estimate of results, let us be honest enough to admit the losses. The equipment of such a community would be nothing like the equipment of a modern society. It would be poor—dreadfully poor—in the world's estimate, though rich in its own estimate, and richer in the things that matter than any society living. And this, I hope, makes clear my point. If we can live a better life, freed from the monstrosities of wholesale machine-production, by all means call upon us to do so. But do not lead us to think that such a mode of life is in any way compatible with the mass of wealth which the world now insists upon having. Do not insinuate that the true artist can also be rich ; for that is impossible. And my whole contention is that the world at present *wants* to be rich, disgustingly rich indeed ; this is its ruling desire, its dominant motive.

I think the Guild Socialists mislead themselves as well as us by a confusion. They confuse two aims : the aim of freeing all existing industry from the ' commercialism ' which enslaves it, and the aim of freeing it from the machine-processes which

commercialism uses as handles for the enslavement. The former aim may conceivably be attained, with only a moderate loss of total wealth, and without any sacrifice of machine-process; the latter aim cannot possibly be attained without destroying the process of wealth-production itself, in its fully developed, modern form.

Thus we see that the dream of some Socialists—to substitute new and purer motives for work than the personal desire of each worker for more wealth—could be realized only at a terrific cost: the loss, in fact, of most of that mass of satisfactions which constitutes wealth. But what of the alternative proposal—that the full wealth production shall continue (machinery and machine processes included), but that each producer shall be motivated by the desire to increase the wealth of all, and not at all by the desire to increase wealth for himself? This is the alternative to which Cole and Bernard Shaw are reduced. Is it tenable?

Let us note first the fact that by far the largest occupation in the world—and perhaps the most important—is and always has been carried on without any direct economic reward whatever. The work of the home maker, the wife and mother, is performed, week in week out, by nearly half the adult workers in the world, not for a wage, not for any money reward, but for the sake of that little bit of society which the worker's family represents. Here surely is the social motive in full operation, freed from any motive of individual economic gain.

Let us note, secondly, that the men of every nation are ready to sacrifice, not only ease and leisure, but life itself, when their country's need demands it. And here too there is no question of individual economic gain: the social motive is again operative, inducing effort and sacrifice greater than any involved in industrial labour.

Do not these examples justify us in claiming at least a possibility for the supersession of economic motive by social motive in the performance of the community's necessary work?

The claim, at any rate, deserves to be carefully weighed. Taking first the case of the citizen soldier, three considerations show us that it will not really help us. The willingness of the citizens to go out and fight their country's enemy is very like the willingness of the farmers to go out and fight a forest fire; in each case the common good is threatened by an immediate danger which must be met immediately. But the fact of their



readiness to combine against an imminent danger gives us no ground whatever for thinking that the same citizens will carry on their peaceful avocations, or that the same farmers will work their farms, for thirty or forty years, under the influence of any motives other than those which now actuate them.

Further, the duty of fighting for one's country is a definite citizen duty which has been accepted and established for many thousands of years—perhaps since humanity began to live in social groups. We may say then that the duty is ingrained in the citizen by centuries of use and wont : when the need arises, he does what has always been expected of him. But the duty of working for a living has always been accepted and established as a private and personal duty ; <sup>1</sup> and this very different conception of it is also ingrained in the citizens by centuries of civilized life. You may indeed proclaim that the conception shall now be changed, and that henceforward the citizens shall be expected to devote all their working days to the community's service and not to their own ; but your proclamation is not likely to change this ingrained attitude.

It is also to be noted that the citizens of the modern State are not universally inspired by the desire to fight for their State or country, in spite of the age-long and general acceptance of the duty. Compulsion has to be applied to a very large number of them—the larger proportion, indeed.

On the whole, therefore, it does not appear to be safe to use the social motive of the citizen-soldier as an argument in favour of the assumption that, in the case of the citizen-worker, the economic motive may be discarded and the social motive left to do its work.

The case of the mother or home-maker is more apposite. In this case at least we have a daily task performed, year after year, by unselfish and often devoted workers who richly deserve but never obtain any wage at all. But here again special features destroy the needed analogy. First, the wife or mother is, whether consciously or not, a partner in a joint undertaking which has for its object the support of the family. Secondly, the mother's work is motivated chiefly by her affection for the

<sup>1</sup> Bosanquet claims that in, e.g., the Greek conception of citizenship the duty of earning one's living was regarded as a citizen duty only second to that of fighting for one's country. He may be right ; but ordinary citizens have always accepted the duty as a private one, and so regard it to-day.

very small group to whose members she is bound by the closest of all human ties. It would no doubt be a sentimental exaggeration to say that her work is always performed as a labour of love: but it is at least true that it is never excellently performed unless the affection is strong and active. And such affection differs in kind and degree from any feeling the citizen may have for his fellow-citizens at large.

Moreover, the influence of use and wont, of long accepted position and duty, enters in very strongly. In giving a full answer to the question—*Why* do the mothers, the home-makers of the world, work as hard as they do?—we could hardly omit some reference to the fact that they accept the position which has always been assigned to them, that they yield to what is universally expected of them, and that they do their job because everybody agrees that it *is* their job. A significant fact must also be noted. Neither the duty of the citizen soldier nor the duty of the unpaid home-worker is accepted quite as willingly, and as much a matter of course as used to be the case. There is a growing tendency to revolt. Many citizens demur against being called upon to sacrifice their lives at the command of their Governments; many wives demur against being any longer the unpaid servants of their families.<sup>1</sup> And it can hardly be denied that this is an indication of an increasing tendency towards self-assertion, that is, assertion of the claims of self against the claims of society and its traditions. Self-realization, development of personality, full freedom to live one's own life—these are the new and generally approved aspirations. I have argued elsewhere that this cannot be otherwise: the attractiveness of the world and of modern life, the enormously greater possibilities of finding absorbing interest in the pursuit of the satisfactions of the self—these all call aloud to us to *be ourselves* as fully as we can. Consequently, the mem-

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that the growing dissatisfaction of women with their unpaid tasks is chiefly due to the very fact that they *are* unpaid. This does not mean that the women are becoming more greedy of gain; but simply that work which is unpaid is without that stamp of public esteem which payment confers. In an economic age, nobody thinks much of it: it is rather despised. But, even if this is the case, it would not be safe to argue that the women would gladly go on with their old home tasks if only we could change the age into a non-economic one. For the call of outside interests would not be in any way weakened: they would still beckon insistently to the individual to come out and develop her individuality to the utmost.

bers of modern societies are becoming (in this direction at least) less definitely social animals and more definitely individual self-seekers than ever before. Natural subordination to society is on the wane : purposive exaltation of individuality is increasing. And if so, is it not an unfortunate moment to choose for the attempt to substitute social motives for the motives of individual gain ?

But it will be objected that social sentiment is *not* waning, but is rapidly waxing in strength. The history of social reform, during the past century at any rate, surely shows this clearly. We care much more for our neighbours than our ancestors did : witness our unceasing efforts on behalf of the sick, the needy, the unfortunate ; witness too our eagerness to improve the conditions of living, to widen opportunities for all, to check the oppression of the weak by the strong. All this is the work of altruism, whose growth is the great sign of our advance, and the great hope for our future.

Now I have an uneasy suspicion that we wealthy peoples of the West are inclined to pride ourselves just a little too much upon our good works of recent years. Perhaps we hope to prove that we are really becoming Christian in deed as well as in name. A rather close study of the history of social reform has convinced me that what has most increased is not our sympathy but just our ability to do needful things and pay the bill without great inconvenience, rather than our real sympathy with those who suffer most if the needful things are not done. But, if you will, let us take our growing altruism at its face value. Do you not see that this does not at all touch the question at issue ? We are, I fear, very apt to delude ourselves when we talk about altruism. For altruism is of two kinds, a positive and a negative. By the negative altruism I mean strong sentiment of dislike of the thought of other people's suffering, coupled with desire to stop that suffering. By the positive altruism I mean strong sentiment of affection for other people, coupled with urgent desire to add to their happiness. Now the negative altruism is certainly increasing : the sentiment side of it is increasing quite rapidly and brings promise of many social reforms. But it is seldom very strong as a motive to individual action. I believe that I can rightly affirm that I have more feeling and thought for the sufferings of my fellow-citizens than most of my ancestors had,—not because I have a kinder heart, but because the awareness of their sufferings is

forced upon me in new ways, owing to the greater closeness of all social contacts, fuller publicity, and wider intercommunication. But I certainly cannot boast that I *do* much more to end them. I am still very much where my forefathers were : a leak in my own roof or a hole in my own shoe spurs me to instant activity, but the knowledge that many of my neighbours are shamefully housed and vilely shod does not, alas ! spur me to anything except vague discomfort and occasional assertions that something ought to be done.

My positive altruism is even weaker. I can understand loving others—just a few others—and working for them. But the circle which really furnishes an effective motive for my work is hardly larger than my own small family. This at least is true of normal life at normal times. I know that my work affects others beyond my little circle, and occasionally, when the effect is brought home to me vividly, I make some additional effort in view of that effect. But the idea of increasing my efforts because of their minute effects upon the fifty million people who are my fellow-citizens leaves me absolutely cold. I cannot conceive of any altruistic interest in them spurring me on to real effort or more intense application to those rather wearisome tasks which are my work. And I refuse to believe that I am herein very much baser than my neighbours.

Frankly, is not this talk of new motives emerging with the growth of altruism just the outcome of uncritical sentimentality ? It appeals to the educated sentimentalist (who ought to know better) as a thousand plausible sophistries will do ; it appeals also to the honest working man, who is often an arch-sentimentalist at heart ; and he has the excuse of little time or material for critical thought. But the wide acceptance of the notion proves no inherent truth in it ; we are all so ready to believe what harmonizes with our best aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

We are thus brought back to compulsion—the compulsion of the group—in some form or other, if our citizens are to continue the sustained industrial efforts upon which the group-livelihood depends. It may be possible to *force* us all to turn aside from private gain and individual self-seeking in our work : to make

<sup>1</sup> I wish we could scrap the word 'altruism' : it is much too soothing and deceptive. Graham Wallas prefers to use the word 'love', and I admit that he is one of the very few citizens who has a right to suggest such a change. But surely the word is far too fine and full of positive meaning for most of us to use when we wish to refer to our altruism.



us all accept our given tasks and do them—because that is the thing expected of the citizen. And in time, I suppose, any society may acquiesce, and its individual members may then turn their *self-interest* to other things than the pursuit of economic satisfactions. It is a very large order, since economic satisfactions mean *everything* with which we now equip our lives and satisfy our desires, except the very small class of goods which cannot be bought for money. And it involves, of course, a very marked diminution of wealth: that is, of those economic satisfactions which now loom so large. The balancing gains may be very great too: I am very ready to admit that a much poorer world might be a much better world to live in. But whether the compulsion will be tolerable or intolerable—whether it can be mitigated in such a way as to be little felt as compulsion—raises issues which must be dealt with in another chapter.

The economic argument of this chapter may be expressed from a different angle in the following way. All citizens are (in theory) at once consumers and producers. Taking first consumption, of the satisfaction of wants by means of purchasable goods, there is no doubt that freedom of choice—that is, freedom to spend our income as we will—is a condition of the maximum satisfaction. If this freedom is withdrawn, we are in the position of people at a feast who are not allowed to gratify their different tastes but must eat whatever is given to them. Further, the available satisfactions must differ in price in accordance with their relative scarcity: otherwise, of course, choice in the disposal of income becomes meaningless. Now, as consumers, we do at present possess complete freedom of choice. But for many this freedom is whittled down to a very small thing by the relative insignificance of their incomes. The poor are not feasters at a well-stocked table, but feeders at a side-table on which only the scraps are laid. And it is arguable that the maximum satisfaction requires that all consumers shall have equal amounts to spend. Against this, however, there are two considerations. First, capacities and needs differ greatly. I do not care to use the phrase ‘pearls before swine’ about my fellow human beings: we cannot use it without condemning ourselves, since we are in part responsible for the existence of ‘lower orders’ within our society. But we have to admit that *at present* many people are not capable of appreciating or using well some of the refined goods available.

Differences of need are more vital. For many kinds of workers there is needed an equipment of life which shall at least be *easy* enough to set them free from all care about their satisfactions. There must be fuller provision for a Prime Minister than for a road-sweeper, for an artist or inventor than for a bottle-washer.

The second consideration is more important. Equality of income may perhaps be ethically fair: it is conceivable that our stubborn ideas of equity are herein unsound, and that some day we shall admit that the humblest worker who, doing his best, produces only a little bit of wealth, has just the same deserts as the very capable enterpriser whose work produces enormous additions to wealth. But—for the present—the important point is this: we cannot equalize the incomes of the two extremes without losing a great part of the total income which is to be shared.

But this brings us to the producer aspect of the citizen. Now on this side also there must be as much freedom of choice of occupation as possible; and the occupations to be chosen must be priced differently, in accordance with the relative scarcity of the abilities needed for them. This is really the central point which no Socialist or Communist grasps. Just as we cannot get our maximum of satisfaction in consumption unless goods are differently priced according to their scarcity, so we cannot get the maximum production of those goods unless the varying functioners needed to produce them are paid differently according to *their* scarcity. The problem at both ends of the economic process is essentially the same: to utilize resources in the most economical way. And, at the 'production' end, economy obviously demands that special abilities of all sorts shall be drawn into the production at the points and in the operations in which they can be most effective. This condition is at present secured (not of course perfectly) by the differential gains to be made by different uses of capacity and by the open market for ability. To level down all gains or rewards is to destroy the natural magnet which attracts ability to this or that most profitable use—the most profitable use being also the most economical for the community.

Now again it is arguable that equality of rewards would not, by itself, make this economical use of ability impossible. On the one hand, it should be possible for a Socialist community to direct all abilities into the appropriate channels for which they are most suited; and on the other hand, the owners of

these abilities might some day find it quite as satisfying to do their best for the community's sake and not for extra gain. In this case, the magnet would no longer be needed. But this argument entirely overlooks the essential facts of value—especially the intricate dependence of all production upon the wants of consumers as proclaimed in a free market, and the reciprocal dependence of all satisfaction of demands upon the direction of productive effort as determined by the proclamations of the consumers' market. This, I know, cannot be explained without a long and difficult economic exposition, which I dare not inflict upon the reader. But even a little thought will show that neither the guidance of authority, however wise, nor the devotion of all able producers, however unselfish, can ever take the place of that automatic and ceaseless reaction upon one another of the demands of consumers for what they most want and the efforts of producers to meet those demands, which is to-day the very efficient cause of the increasing creation of values.

Put in a simpler way, the crucial matter is this. Authoritative determination of production, even under the most perfect conditions of universally unselfish service, involves a loss of vitality in the social economy. At the present time, satisfaction of wants is rapidly increasing just because the most energetic or pushing brains are rushing in everywhere, not only to satisfy existing demands, but to elicit latent demands and then provide their satisfactions. The economic structure is like a vigorous tree which not only provides material for the growth of its leaves and fruits, but is continually thrusting up new and unexpected shoots in all directions—with unforeseen growth of many strange novelties in the way of fruit and flowers. The Socialist or Communist tree may be healthy and tall and strong: no one can tell. But it is not likely to provide the other kind of growth which we have come to expect as an essential of economic progress.

You may say that it does not matter; that complete happiness is to be found in the shelter of the old tree. Yes: you may be right—if you are prepared to check that desire for more and yet more, which has never yet been driven out from the hearts of all consumers.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BETTER ORDERING OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

**I**N the long section just completed, we have considered the attempts of individualists, Socialists and Communists to save the individual unit from the tyranny of economic forces which appear to be robbing him of his initiative as a human worker, or exploiting him of the fruits of his labour, or degrading him to the condition of a will-less cog in the vast machine of wealth-production. But before we can express an opinion on the poor unit's chance of survival as a real individual, we must consider his position in other fields of activity besides the industrial. Perhaps we think too exclusively of the economic activities and their results—not unnaturally, in a world in which so much of our welfare seems to depend upon the amount we have to spend on the equipment of our lives. But it must be remembered that all the revolts which we have considered, whether of individualism or of Socialism or of Communism, are revolts against much more than economic tyranny. Taking first the individualists, we are apt to regard them chiefly as exponents of the principle of *laissez-faire, laissez-aller, laissez-passer*, in the sense of freedom of enterprise in the making and moving of economic goods. But the philosophers of individualism have had a far wider horizon. Bentham was principally concerned with our freedom from the oppression of bad law and mistaken codes of morality. John Stuart Mill's passion for liberty was focused upon the liberty of the individual mind to think and believe and will whatever it chose, so long as it injured no other individual ; in other words, he fought the tyranny of creed and church and accepted authority, in religion, in ethics, in education, and in all the cultural activities. Herbert Spencer was most interested in political freedom : he championed the cause of the man versus the State—even the most democratic State. The individualism of Auberon Herbert and Bernard Bosanquet followed the same lines of interest, though in very different ways ; the



former tended to treat the individual and the State as necessarily antagonistic, since State compulsion is inherently opposed to real voluntarism; while the latter, accepting and even glorifying the State, set himself to work out the right relations of free individuals to the Great Institution.

Similarly Socialism contains a far wider doctrine than that presented by most followers of Karl Marx. Owen and Fourier envisaged a Socialism which should reform the whole of our community life, with particular attention to reciprocal services in education, science and discovery, and the whole field of cultural activity. William Morris (and perhaps Bellamy) treated Socialism not at all as in itself an ideal, nor as a device for ensuring the fair distribution of economic goods, but as an instrument wherewith to open wide the doors of life to the human individual who is potentially an artist and a creator, and a joyous inventor of ways of living well. Even the rather mechanical Socialism of Sidney Webb is a far bigger thing than any economic reconstruction, for it includes the complete reorganization of central and local government, with all their effects upon the entire life of the community. And finally, the Guild Socialists present an ideal of group co-operation which shall recast most of the relationships and activities of our life—perhaps at the expense of economic gain or even of economic fairness—thus bringing back to us (through that mutual aid which Kropotkin tells us is an original law of life) all the joy of work and of play which we have lost.

It is unnecessary to labour the point in regard to communism. One of the most obvious criticisms of communism is that it threatens, not our property only, but our very souls, for the communal control can and will invade every corner of life, change every institution, and regulate every form of activity.

Now the three 'isms' which we have been considering have certain elements in common. They are all revolts against some dire tyranny, actual or threatened; and they all aim, in the first instance, at saving the individual from the loss of his rights or of his personality or his qualities as an individual.<sup>1</sup> The tyranny envisaged is not the same in each case. For the individualist, tyranny resides in the will of the community, whenever this is allowed to express itself as force, coercing the wills of individuals. For the Socialist and Communist, the

<sup>1</sup> Even Communism begins with this aim, though it ends by turning upon the individual and subordinating him entirely to the community.

community (though not necessarily the State) is both friend and saviour rather than oppressor; tyranny resides in the power seized by individuals or groups within the community, who are thus enabled to use the resources of property and wealth to coerce, degrade and enslave all other individuals.

Of the three, it is generally said that individualism alone has so far been allowed to try its hand in the modern world—and has failed dismally to effect its purpose of rescuing the individual. But this is not quite true. Individualism has not been tried, simply because no modern society could afford to scrap its manifold restraints and compulsions (including compulsory taxation), and every modern society has been forced by circumstances to tighten its hold over individual activities in the interests of health and orderliness. In England, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the individualist remedy was indeed applied in trade and industry; but its potentialities as a remedy were thwarted in all other fields by the prejudices of Tories and sentimentalists, by the dead weight of custom and law, and by the inertia of the very individuals whom it was desired to save. In America, blessed by the absence of a Tory party and of many hampering traditions, the individualist remedy is still in operation, perhaps as fully as modern conditions allow. But the salvation of the individual is very far from being realized; above all, the tyranny of money-power and of communal interference with the will and choice of the separate citizens is still rampant.

On the other hand, very important elements of Socialism and Communism are at work in all modern societies, and are increasing daily. Indeed, it is the boast of the Fabian Socialists that Socialism is not a dream for to-morrow, but is a practical working reality now in operation on a grand (though of course not complete) scale.

And still the poor individual groans under oppression: whatever remedy is uppermost, his pains abate not. Apply the individualist remedy as completely as you can: you leave him exposed to the oppression of every powerful and ruthless neighbour, and to the dire dangers of an ill-regulated environment. Apply the remedy of State or Community control, and you may check these oppressions, but you expose him in turn to the tyranny of the organized community with all its dictates. The poor unit, it seems, cannot be free; he must suffer one form of oppression or the other. Is it because poli-

tical and economic freedom cannot save him, because institutions cannot save him, because social control and guidance cannot save him? Are we to assume that no cure at all exists for his ills, because the tyranny from which he suffers is a tyranny of natural law, of inevitable circumstances?

The answer is, I think, perfectly simple. Tyranny is inherent in the social environment itself, whenever it passes beyond a very strict limit of simplicity. In a really complex environment, we must all live in fetters.

I do not expect that this doctrine will find favour with the worshippers of progressive complexity who are the majority of our modern citizens. Yet it is a plain and simple doctrine, in full accord with the facts of life. A very little reflection will, I think, make this clear.

Freedom and restraint are correlative terms, and denote correlative things: we assume that they vary inversely.<sup>1</sup> When there is much freedom, there is little restraint; when there is much restraint, there is less freedom. Moreover, restraint and complexity go hand in hand. When activities and opportunities for action are very numerous and varied, the restraints imposed by law and rule must also be numerous. This is obvious enough in the microcosm of the individual soul. If my desires are few, simple and healthy, my will needs no decalogue of 'don'ts'; its choosings may safely be unrestrained. But if my desires are very numerous and manifold, and (as must then be the case) often conflicting and contradictory, my will must be guided and its choosings restrained by a host of rules and prohibitions. For the good soul, this is no hardship, since he himself wills the restraints and knows them to be his own. But the normal individual does not himself will or choose the moral code which restrains him; nor does he really make his own conscience. Both the code and the content of conscience are 'given' by outside authority, and obeyed or disobeyed as the individual decides.

This is also true of society. Whenever (as has not infre-

<sup>1</sup> I do not say that this assumption is correct. See the note at the end of this chapter. It will be noted that I do not consider the case of the man who is completely free in spite of restraints, because he does not feel these *as* restraints, but accepts and chooses them gladly as the recognized conditions of his freedom. And I omit the case of such a man, just because there is no problem of freedom for him. But normal citizens, for whom there is a very pressing problem of freedom, are perhaps as far removed from this type as they are from that of Epictetus.

quently happened) a group voluntarily isolates itself from the surrounding complexity, and reduces both its wants and its activities to a more simple level, then individual freedom is regained, and the acts of all are willed and chosen by each agent, subject only to voluntary subordination to the recognized good of the whole group.

At this point it will doubtless be objected that the life of primitive peoples does not at all bear out this principle. Their activities are certainly simple, but their lives are certainly not free. This at any rate is the prevailing opinion. It has been generally, and is to-day commonly, held that the simple savage is very much a slave, hemmed in by custom and superstition, restrained at every turn by taboos and senseless rules, fettered by all the limitations imposed by ignorance and inability to deal competently with nature. The 'noble savage roaming free' of Rousseau has been dismissed as being historically a myth; Hobbes was right in describing his life as nasty, short and brutish. This, as I say, has been the prevailing view. A generation ago, Edward Carpenter thought it necessary to apologize, even to the broad-minded Fabian Society, for arguing in favour of the opposite view. But to-day opinion is fast swinging round. A fuller knowledge of the conditions of primitive man is leading us to the conclusion that he was not only kindly and very moral, but also happy and remarkably free.<sup>1</sup> Rousseau appears to have been right after all, and Hobbes

<sup>1</sup> See for example *The Growth of Civilization*, by W. J. Perry. 'Suppose it were to be suggested that, far from civilization having tamed the savage, it has made him into a "savage", into a being who has learned modes of violent conduct entirely unknown to his forerunners. Suppose it be suggested that, as civilization has developed from its most primitive stages, mankind has been educated in cruelty as well as in other ways. An argument such as this, which seems to turn thought upside down, to reverse our current conceptions of the meaning of what we term "civilization", will have to be supported by many facts if it is to gain any hearing. Yet I submit that all we know of history has gone to support it' (page 192).

'The unanimity with which men and women who live among such peoples and know them well, testify to their honesty, their fidelity to the marriage tie, their kind treatment of children, their respect for the old, and their peaceful behaviour in all their relationships, is one of the most striking phenomena of ethnology' (page 194).

I am aware, of course, that Perry's view is considered exaggerated by many Ethnologists. But I quote it as a strong indication of the tendency towards a revised estimate of the conditions of life among primitive peoples.



wrong. In some ways, no doubt, primitive peoples (herein resembling children) are subject to fixed and apparently arbitrary rules which to us would be intolerable. But these are accepted by them as the necessary conditions of their safety (which they usually are), and are not felt as hindrances at all. Because the simple life of children requires to be safeguarded by nursery regulations, it does not follow that grown-up people would need similar regulations in order to live an equally simple life.

We may therefore with some confidence re-affirm the principle suggested, namely that when social activities and purposes are simple, restraints are relatively simple too. But every advance in range and complexity, whether of purpose or of ambition or of activity, brings with it its inevitable accompaniment of new restraints. With lust for conquest and the arts of warfare, there is introduced the tyranny of the war chiefs and the warrior caste, together with compulsory service and compulsory taxation. When lust for gain grows stronger, and the pushing activities of trade and commerce compete with the peaceful activities of husbandry and home handicrafts, there appears the tyranny of wealth concentrated in the hands of the successful trader, who is now able to exploit his fellow-citizens. Not only so, but each new branch of desire and action involves new codes of regulation, applied chiefly to the new activities, but applied in part also to the older activities with which the new compete. And if, as must happen, the most powerful of the new agents demand, and for a time obtain, freedom for their own enterprise, this in turn leads to new restraints in order to check the abuses of such freedom; and these restraints, universalized, as they must be, fall upon the just as well as upon the unjust, and add some fetters to all.

The apogee is reached in the manifold, pulsating life of the most successful of modern communities, in which 'laws are being increased at the rate of 10,000 a year'—are becoming so numerous indeed that part of the art of the wise citizen consists in his ability to evade them, and their natural guardian—the policeman—has become 'merely a sauntering symbol of our helplessness in dealing with the problems which life in a great urban community brings with it'.

Nor is it only the tyranny of law and regulation which limits my freedom. Even in the most complex society, I am not yet forbidden to take a country walk. I am only restrained by my

inability to find a country road along which I can walk—and preserve my life. No law yet forbids me to keep a dog : I am only prevented by the impossibility of keeping him alive for long unless I keep him severely within doors. I am still allowed to grow flowers in my back garden : but the flowers which I once grew have become such an insult to nature (thanks to the city's poisons) that I perforce desist.

Of course there is another side to all this. Even if restraints have increased, nevertheless the opportunities for free activity have increased too ; and a wider range of choice is open to every citizen than has ever been the case before. If I cannot take a country walk, I can join the stream of automobiles and travel 200 miles where before I could cover only 10. If I cannot now keep a dog, I can keep a brass band or a concert singer or a popular entertainer in my parlour—always at hand to amuse me. Our forefathers had a dull and narrow life by comparison with us ; why should we grumble because we also have a few more rules to obey ?

All this is true enough. Indeed, if our complex civilization did not afford compensating advantages, we should scrap it to-morrow. Let us grant that it has widened the horizon of life and its interests enormously for the great mass of the people. Still there remains the fact that dissatisfaction is growing : the sense of something burdensome, something intolerably oppressive to the free spirit of a free man, is forcing its way into the consciousness of more of us every day. The well-organized herd may have a very big prairie to gallop over : but in proportion as the imperious demands of individuality make themselves felt in the separate members of the herd, in that proportion do they resent both the restraining organization itself and the compulsion of the herd-standard and the herd-code.

How then shall the free individuality of the citizen be secured and safeguarded ? I suppose the most obvious answer is—By reducing the size of the social unit. For it is not entirely fanciful to suggest that modern societies have reached the point at which, like the prehistoric monsters, they cannot cope with life because they are too big to manage life satisfactorily. The political aspects of the matter—its relations to the problem of good government—do not concern us here ; but it may be noted that they have interested political philosophers from Aristotle to Graham Wallas, and that all have agreed that the

unit of government should be comparatively small. Unfortunately, however, it is not a matter of choice at all. When we ask how a smaller unit of government or of social life shall be established, we are met by an unanswerable difficulty. The huge size of most modern societies is traceable to two influences : war and trade. War, with its concomitants—jealousies and ambitions, conquest and desire for conquest and dread of conquest—has forced men out of the City State and the rural community into the vast combinations of groups which form the ground work of modern nations. The combinations cannot dissolve, so long as war is one—perhaps the strongest—of humanity's bad habits. This, however, is now so generally recognized that we need not emphasize the point further.

The influence of trade, and of the desires and activities bound up with it, is not so fully realized. But a little consideration will show that the supposed necessities of the trade upon which all our industrial life depends are the most serious obstacle in the way of reducing the size of the Great Societies. We all know how the autonomy of small industrial groups, such as the city with its guilds and the Manor with its little industries, was destroyed by the development of trade and manufacture. The nation became the inevitable trading group ; world trade quickly overstepped the boundaries of nations and became international. Banking and finance are now cosmopolitan ; most big industrial concerns have organized operations in all parts of the world, such as owned or controlled sources of raw material, owned or affiliated productive works, and the like. The destruction of the little, isolated autonomies of former days is nearly complete ; indeed, one is apt to think that the process can go no farther. But it is not fully realized that the greater autonomies which have ousted the little ones are now themselves threatened. Just as society could not afford to allow the close corporation of guild or borough to hamper the development of trade, so to-day society cannot afford to allow the far stronger financial or industrial corporations to threaten, by their autonomy and independence, the safety of national or world-wide industry. We have learned that the security of all nations may be endangered by the political misbehaviour of any one of them. We are learning also that the industrial activity of all countries may be disturbed by the behaviour of any single set of autonomous functioners in any one country—let us say the steel producers of America or the

coal-miners of England or the bankers of France or the rubber-growers or the farmers of East or West. The danger which may arise from the autonomy of certain industrial groups is reflected in the growing demand for drastic curtailment of such autonomy. The cry for nationalization of key industries is only quieted by forced offers of Government control and supervision. We cannot afford to leave them independent and free to dislocate all industrial welfare by their obstinacy or greed any more than we can afford to leave separate nations quite independent of general control and free to dislocate the peace of the world by their passions or jealousies. The operations of world-trade and world-industry are too vital a matter to be left at the mercy of independent groups. We must control them centrally and collectively, even if our control destroys the last survivals of real autonomy and free direction of industrial forces.

This short account, which emphasizes not only present tendencies but the inherent necessities of the matter, points to one conclusion. Collectivism is inevitable, in some form or other : on how vast a scale, no one can yet say. Quite possibly it must be world-wide, not nation-wide. We seem to have decided that, if we are to check the incessant disturbances of political peace due to independent war-making, we can do so only by a world-court of control. So too, if we are to check the dislocations of industrial activity due to gain-making on the part of independent corporations, it may be that we can do so only by a world-court of industrial control. But even if the necessary collectivism is confined to the nation, the prospect is disquieting, apart from its effect upon free enterprise, for a special reason. Our control of the industrial activities on a great scale must necessarily be a blind control, since, in relation to the great movements and essential processes of trade, we are, on the whole, helplessly ignorant. We seem to have mastered the problem of making a living for humanity only to discover that we do not know how to distribute that living to the makers of it. And when we talk about international trade, about the world having become a single market, about the need for national or world control and direction, we do not realize that we are preparing to deliver ourselves over to even more dangerous forces than those which now baffle us.

I expect criticism here. Is there not a science of Economics, a science of International Finance, of Commerce and of Bank-



ing? Certainly there are such sciences, or the beginnings of them; certainly, also, they are much too feeble to understand or explain the really vital processes of economic activity. And if the economic expert disputes this, let him consider just a few points. For much more than a century, all economists have been inquiring whether it is an advantage to a nation that its trade should be free, or whether and to what extent it should be protected. For more than half a century, all economists have been inquiring into the causes of depressions of trade and resultant unemployment of workers. These are perhaps the two most vital and urgent problems for all industrial societies. And the result of the inquiries? If you do not exactly find a condition of *quot homines, tot sententiae*—as many diverse views as there are inquirers—you do at least find an amazing diversity of opinion which would be both inexcusable and inexplicable except upon one hypothesis; and that hypothesis is that the pertinent facts are too complicated for any single mind to comprehend. Again, it should be a simple matter for Economic Science to advise the owners of money as to the best ways of using it. Should they spend it as their inclination bids them to? Or should they save part of it? And if so, can they invest their savings with any certainty that they will thereby increase, not only the production of wealth, but also the flow of wealth through the usual channels of distribution? In other words, can a rich man, who does not want to be selfish, return part of his income to production with the assurance that it will do more good than harm? Here again is a very vital matter: and in this case most economists answer the question with decision and unanimity. And yet, after many discussions with many economists, I have been unable to unearth any valid proof behind the usual assumption that saving and investment must be good for industrial welfare generally. We all know that they increase wealth production: that needs no proof. But how shall we know whether or not they also increase the difficulties of distribution, and so may perhaps injure both the healthiness of industrial functioning and the well-being of the very workers whom we wish to help?

These are big general questions. What of the guidance of economic science in more special difficulties? I suppose the department of banking and finance has received more study than any other, both on its practical and on its theoretical side. Surely this must be understood by now. Yet in the past eight

years we have seen European countries floundering helplessly in the face of a currency which has got beyond their control ; and when the most experienced of them all—Great Britain—decided to return to the gold standard, the experts who recommended the step were opposed by equally wise experts who prophesied disaster, and who still insist that our precipitate action has caused much of the subsequent decline of trade and unemployment.

I am most anxious not to be misunderstood in this matter. There is a science of Economics and business activities, just as there is a science of warfare ; and knowledge of it not only increases the business man's ability to deal with his business, but also—and this is much more important—increases any one's understanding of many of the processes of economic life. But just as the soldier's science tells him little or nothing of the true significance of war in relation to society's life, so the economist's science tells him very little of the significance of economic activities in relation to the final well-being of society—nor even explains their effects as part of the social complex. For, in the latter case, we run into the dark field of uncharted social change ; and in relation to that there is only one kind of ' law ' which has any real validity : and that is what we call the moral law.

We see then that the progressive development of the greatest of all activities—the industrial—brings with it a restriction of freedom more menacing than that brought by the mere growth of complexity in other forms of activity. For the restraint is laid upon individuals and groups alike : it is imposed by the organized force of nations acting collectively—a form of world-collectivism, indeed ; and yet there is no guarantee that the dictates of this organized force will be wise or right, because no science is yet competent to deal with the amazingly complex issues involved. Therein lies the chief danger. The compelling power will not be a wise autocracy, even though it may include the best-informed elements of all nations. It will issue its decrees in ignorance ; and the results of authoritative ignorance are apt—to say the least—to be disconcerting and uncomfortable.

Let us now re-state the position in general terms, in order the more clearly to see its significance in relation to the social good.

Human evolution may be expressed in terms of increasing inventiveness, and increasing diversity of resulting activities. These at any rate indicate the causal groundwork of progressive civilization. And the evolution is in line with the cosmic process, in so far as we can judge it on this planet, on which the evolutionary purpose appears to be the creation of every possible diversity of form and type. Now diversity as such is certainly not to be regarded as an evil ; and diversity of activity, as such, is not only not harmful, but is very necessary for ordinary human beings whose lives are to be full and interesting. At the same time, it brings with it certain difficulties. As activities become more diversified, they cause new competitions—in the individual life, between rival interests, and in the social life, between individuals and groups. Too much diversity of activity would be chaotic : there would be constant collisions if all of us were doing different things at the same time, for all activities affect other people as well as the agents themselves. Happily we are saved from this danger by the imitative tendency of all social beings : we not only follow a lead, but we like to do as others do and to do things with them. But this introduces another difficulty. Imitation of activity leads to mass activity, which may easily become a dangerous force, just as molecular activity becomes formidable if the active molecules are combined into a great mass. And when mass activity on the part of human beings involves very large masses, all other human beings are likely to be seriously interfered with, if not actually endangered. (By mass activity I mean something more than a great many people doing the same thing at the same time. Ten million people may go to Church at the same time, or play Bridge at the same time, with no particular ill-effects upon others. But if the ten million people massed themselves together to found a new religion, or to convert us all to compulsory Bridge, their activities would disturb the world.)

Now the two activities which more than all others to-day lend themselves to mass organization are the two which are of most vital importance (though in very different senses)—I mean, the activities of destroying life and the activities of making a living : that is, war and industry. The world is rightly scared by the fear of massed war, for war is simply organized bad behaviour. But organized good behaviour in the form of organized industrial production may also injure others by its

massed activity—as we see in the case of any great Trust or Combine or Union. The *size* of the aggregate involved, like the size of an invading army, introduces a special element of danger, for it gives to the mass the kind of uncontrollable force which may injure every one.

Hence the necessity of control ; and with it, the necessity of limiting or supervising the related activities of everybody. The evolutionary process itself—increasing complexity accompanied by increase of mass—imposes its restrictions upon us as it unfolds.

Now it is possible to argue that this does not matter, because the area of free activity is always growing in other directions, and will always leave scope enough for will and initiative. But, by common consent, it *does* matter. The leaders of the industrial world everywhere, and the rank and file in many cases, resent the control, which they have good reason to regard as ignorant control. The social idealists who are not of the Socialist fold (and the Socialist groups do not really embrace all idealists) resent the control most vehemently, for it checks the play of those free forces upon which progress depends. Political and moral philosophers join with the idealists in their protests, for the control is always a form of tyranny, the restraint is always a wall built in the face of the freedom which makes life worth while. Part of the evolutionary process itself is antagonistic : for there is no doubt that human evolution is leading to the development of stronger individualities, each bent upon living in its own way, impatient of restraint, above all, impatient of commands issued by a distant authority. And finally, even the upholders of Socialism and Communism,—who are really quite human at bottom—are antagonistic, whether they admit it or not. At present they make rather light of freedom, for communal control is their one efficient instrument. But each separate Socialist group is up in arms against dictation by any other group ; and in the constant change of their doctrines there is a steady set toward the very freedom which they seem to neglect. Nothing shows this more clearly than the popularity of the doctrines of Guild Socialism, which, as its theory is worked out, shows more and more its championship of the free activities of each individual and each group.

What then is to be done ? I confess I see nothing for it but to adapt to our need the motto of the conquering Romans, and



to proceed upon the principle of *Divide et libera* ; that is, to reduce the size of our autonomous groups until they reach the limits within which mass activities will no longer be dangerous to others, and within which complexity of activities may be freed from its chief menace—the incidence of unforeseen injuries from unknown quarters. But we have only to state this suggestion to see its apparent futility. At this moment, the great units which we call nations are grouping themselves into still greater units, partly no doubt for the prevention of war, partly too for the conserving and strengthening of economic forces. European peoples are amalgamating their resources and their activities in connexion with big productions such as iron and steel and chemicals ; proposals—seriously considered—are afoot for a ‘ United States ’ of continental Europe ; a similar union of the British nation and Dominions is envisaged by many as an inevitable sequel. It may well happen that, before many years have passed, the industrially important parts of the western world will be grouped into three huge divisions. After all, is not this in line with the march of evolutionary progress?—the advance to ever greater masses uniting within themselves ever greater differentiations ? But if so, why dream about the reduction of the size of the social group ? Is this not just one more instance of the philosopher shutting his eyes to the inevitable, and beating his feeble fists upon the closed door of accomplished fact ?

It may be so. Yet his hopes are not quite groundless. To begin with, individualism never dies. It springs from the will to ‘ be oneself ’, the will to have life and to have it more abundantly, which is the kernel of all individuality. And that will grows stronger and more insistent with all our growth. We do indeed transfer part of it to the societies to which we belong : its surplus strength, as it were, is given to society or nation or even federation of nations. But that is itself a sign of the greater growth of its power within us, as part of us. We are endowing our great communities with power to act and combine in action with others over an increasing field of interests, just because our own strength as individuals is great. But all the time *we* are insisting more vigorously upon *our* rights as actors and planners of our lives. And so we see to-day—what seems a paradox—an intense individualism creeping into the most vigorous Socialism ; so we see a growing pride—almost a growing absorption—in the very small group of clan

or fraternity or township, most marked in the nation whose unified growth is the most phenomenal ; so too we see the growing appeal of those backward-looking and almost mediaeval idealists who call upon us to return to the neighbourly life of a free locality, to cultivate a parochial patriotism, devoting our energies to the joint pursuits which we can regard as ours and in which we can claim real freedom, because the people who share in the control are *our* people, all known to us and in a sense part of us. After all, the great nation is something monstrous, an impersonal force which neither you nor I control. The hope of democracy has failed in this at least : the normal citizen, despite his vote, does not really feel that his State is guided and controlled by him. Its government is alien—and yet not very wise or expert in either the political or the economic matters which it regulates. So he turns with relief to his own place and people—his own little ‘ burg ’—whose doings really are his doings and its life his life.

I dare not guess at the probable lines of the movement towards the small but vital unit. That the movement is taking place, and must increase, I have little doubt ; and with it must come some recovery of the sense of individual freedom which counts for so much in the good life. We have seen that the greatest obstacles to the independence of the small group, and the greatest factors of the dominance of the overgrown social unit, are those two contrary yet allied activities, war and trade. We are nearly all in agreement about the sheer necessity of suppressing war, if any social good is to endure. We have no intention of suppressing trade, nor is there any reason whatever why it should be anything but an agent of good. But we certainly have not yet made it our servant—perhaps because we have not yet discovered its true place in relation to other agents of good. We look askance at any attempt, on the part of any section of our community or of the world, to withdraw in any degree at all from the full stream of trade activities ; for every such attempt suggests the possible loss of a market and a possible diminution of total wealth. So too we look askance at any attempt on the part of any workers to subordinate even a fraction of their economic activities to what they regard as the greater needs of life as a whole. We are even suspicious (sometimes with reason) of any kind of idealist who refuses to be absorbed in the pursuit of wealth, and attempts to seduce others from their full allegiance. Perhaps our

sense of proportion is a little distorted. At any rate, we cannot but welcome the growth of an idealism, not only among individualists but among Socialists also, which consciously aims at freeing the individual from the oppression of the vast system of industry, and restoring to him some part of the control which he has lost. That is the supreme merit alike of the small community ideal and the Craft Guild ideal—and of much of the best Socialism also. And my criticism of the latter on the ground that it must inevitably diminish wealth production may perhaps lose most of its force if there is any validity in the claim that the citizen worker will nevertheless be made the conscious controller of his own work ; indeed, if this claim can be made good, even the far deeper criticisms based on the probable loss of individual freedom would fall to the ground.

NOTE.—I have assumed throughout that, in a real sense, perhaps in the most real sense, the consciousness of freedom is freedom. And this, I think, is generally true. Our limitations are nearly unlimited ; the number of things which we cannot do is past numbering ; but these conditions are common to all of us, and matter not at all. What matters is any arbitrary limitation, or one which is not shared by all, or one which we feel need not or should not exist. Then, and only then, we rebel, and assert that we are not free. The universal, necessary, accepted limitations are wiped out of our consciousness : we are too sensible to think about them. But the limitations which seem to be in any way arbitrary have a sharp edge which cuts into our consciousness, and destroys any feeling of harmony.

It is easy to see, then, the relation of freedom to law. General laws, binding on all citizens, may be multiplied almost indefinitely, provided we do not think them arbitrary or unnecessary. And ' we ' means clearly all decent or orderly citizens ; for none but the orderly citizen can be taken as the test of what is right or good for society. Consequently, even though society is not ' good ' in any but a very modest sense, the decent citizens can be completely free although under the law, provided only the laws are by them considered to be necessary to orderly and decent living. We ' will ' those laws, even though we have had very little to do with framing them or imposing them. Our consciousness of freedom is not impaired.

If we accept this conception, determinism, from which there

is no logical escape, loses its terrors for us. Natural law, causal law, social law, all alike fall into line in the category of limitations which do not matter. The consciousness of freedom rides serenely above them ; and so long as it does so, we are free.

But the assertion that only the good man is wholly free remains true. For subordination to moral law differs from subordination to all other law in this : a double recognition is required. None of us can escape *some* recognition of a moral law of some sort. It obtrudes itself on all except the morally insane. At the same time, no one can deny its cogency, if it is recognized at all. Yet only the good man can recognize this cogency for what it is—an unmixed good ; for only he knows that he will at all times obey it gladly. For him alone, therefore, it expresses no compulsion or restraint whatever.

I must add a few paragraphs to explain the full bearing of this and the preceding chapter upon the general question of the social good. We have considered economic reconstruction chiefly in relation to the first requirement of the good, namely work. Now the aim of all economic reformers is, at bottom, the same : to ensure for every individual ' the adequate and satisfactory exercise of function ' in that department of activity which we placed first among the essentials of the good life.<sup>1</sup> We have seen that no proposed reform can secure quite what is needed. Some conditions which we would all like to alter must be accepted as unalterable. You and I cannot, in the world of to-day, do just the work which we would like best to do—unless we are very fortunately placed. But, when once we realize the inevitable nature of this condition, it need not trouble us much, for the performance of a function imposed upon us by the recognized necessities of our social life can and does furnish for the good citizen all that his happiness requires, so far as this department of his own functioning is concerned. Much more serious, however, are other defects connected with the work-function : especially the arbitrary variations of

<sup>1</sup> See the *Journal of Philosophical Studies* for April, 1926 ; an article by Professor J. W. Scott on ' Recent Tendencies in Social Philosophy '. Professor Scott defines social happiness as ' the adequate and satisfactory exercise of function by a set of human beings living with one another '. I do not think the definition is claimed to be complete ; but it agrees in the main with that which I gave in the first chapter.



reward, the arbitrary subordinations of many workers, the indignity of some work, the unfairly depressed condition of some groups of functioners (especially the most vital, such as those connected with farming and mining), and—worst of all—the dreadful insecurity of work for vast numbers of workers. These are not only ‘unsatisfactory conditions’, but are felt unfairnesses, whose very nature it is to spoil the satisfaction of any functioning. And these unfairnesses are due, fundamentally, to the vastness and intricate complexity of economic activities in the modern world, superimposed upon a social structure adapted only to simpler conditions, and carrying with it a mentality which belongs to an earlier state of society. But it is only part of the truth to say that we are not yet ‘adapted’ to our economic growth, or it to us. Many of its characteristics, many of its evident tendencies, are of a sort to which we ought not to be adapted—ought not even to try to adapt ourselves. For this very reason we cannot but welcome the attempts of the idealist to change those characteristics and to block those tendencies: our only quarrel with him is that his attempts sometimes seem bound to introduce other characteristics equally dangerous. We seem to be reduced to the confession that humanity’s efforts to make a living, and to make that living good by ingenuity and concentration of effort, all lead to this result: that the normal individual, for whom society and its industry really exist, is snowed under by the mass, not of the things made, but of the bad effects of the process of making them; and that he seems unable to push his way through to the position which he ought to occupy, of a real functioner who knows that his function is valid; who knows that it is a vital part of the total functioning, who knows that it is fairly recognized for what it is by all his fellows, and who knows that it is *his* to use all through his life as the foundation of his happiness.

These are the obvious troubles connected with the work-function; and we have seen reason to believe that there is no escape from them until the worker is really and fully a citizen. The underlying cause of the troubles is just this: that, in the Great Societies, *citizenship is not real*; it cannot operate as an effective reality; it cannot be felt as real.

But the troubles of the worker and the unsatisfactoriness of the work-function are only a part of the evil. There is interdependence between the essentials of a good life for the indi-

vidual ; and there is interdependence between the individuals who are trying to live it. For the individual, if one essential element is wrong, none of the others can be right. If my work fills me with a sense of unfairness or even of helplessness, my relations to my fellows, my conception of a purpose to be followed in life, my range and quality of interests, will all suffer. Particularly will it be impossible for me to find in the work the interest which I should do, for the work itself is turned into something hostile,—hostile to me as I to it ; and interest does not thrive in an atmosphere of hostility.

And the good of all other individuals is affected too. You or I may be among the favoured ones whose work is free from the drawbacks and uncertainties which affect so many others. But how can we be happy in it so long as our consciousness is never free from the thought of those others and the unfairnesses under which they suffer ? How can we in our turn cultivate the interests which most attract us, if we know that we can only do so over the heads of others ? For it must be remembered that social sympathy is the very first of the interests which the citizen must cultivate if he—and the others—are to be happy.

These are some of the considerations which we must keep in mind for our final estimate of the chances of good or happiness for the normal citizen of normal society.

## CHAPTER X

### REFORM BY EDUCATION

THE cry for education, and ever more education, is the commonest and the most popular of all the cries for reform. It is so safe, and so sane ; of all panaceas this alone is unlimited in its promise and unobjectionable in its method. No educated citizen can refuse the plea : is he not himself an illustration of what education can do for a man ? Little wonder that it is put forward as the cure for the general malady of society, and a specific remedy for many particular ills. A typical example may be quoted.<sup>1</sup> We have recently been told by a leading educational expert that ' when 90 per cent. instead of 10 per cent. of the English-speaking peoples are equipped with higher education, he is confident that wars will cease, and long strides will be made in the " science of peace ", about which the most learned are as incompetent babes '. The logic is not clear. The higher education applied to 10 per cent. of the people has left even the best of them in the condition of incompetent babes ; but if we extend the same treatment to another 80 per cent., the result will be totally different. Why ? One can understand better the cry for more Christianity or more Buddhism in order to ensure progress in the ' science of peace '. I suppose we cry for more education because we must have something in which to put our trust—and the older gods are dead. But is it not a little pathetic ? It is not really claimed that education has saved the educated classes from their sins, or made them models of good citizenship or shining lights of political wisdom. Most of those who lead the demand for the educational remedy have, like me, had the advantage of a prolonged and excellent education quite beyond the reach of the majority. They doubtless feel, as I do, that they owe to it much of the happiness which comes from wider and deeper interests ; but has it made us less acquisitive, less

<sup>1</sup> The quotation is taken from a reported address by Dr. J. L. Paton in 1925, in British Columbia.

competitive, less self-assertive—or less foolish? Are we educated classes the elect or the saved? I suspect that we all believe in applying the education we have received to others, because it may cause them to share our views, which must be right views, or else we should not hold them. But once more, is it not a little pathetic? I have seen Socialists and Anti-Socialists alike clamour for the teaching of Industrial history and Economics, for only so will people learn good sense and truth—their own good sense and truth. The most profound student of Industrial history and Economics in the nineteenth century was probably Karl Marx, the evangelist of socialistic revolution. But Henry Fawcett and Alfred Marshall were not far behind him; and the lessons they learned from the study were vastly different. Some of the wisest friends of ‘Labour’ are now devoting most of their efforts to the education of working men and women. Who am I to say that they are not right? We have had our world widened and our lives enriched by our education: do we not owe it to others to share our gain with them? And is it unreasonable to believe that a people possessing some knowledge and some habit of using their brains is better than a people with sluggish minds and a narrow horizon? But the reformers’ expectations are not satisfied with this. They believe in the regenerative power of education; they conceive it to be the agent of a new and better world. And herein I think lies disappointment.

To return to the commoner conception of educational reform. Most enthusiasts concentrate their attention upon the education of the children. They proceed upon the assumption (which most of us accept blindly) that childhood is by far the most impressionable and the most important period in the life of the individual.<sup>1</sup> The improvement of society therefore depends upon the application of right education during this period. And right education is—what?

The competing conceptions of education fall into two great

<sup>1</sup> The assumption is certainly not true universally. For many individuals the most important period by far is the years from the beginning of adolescence to the end of growth. For many individuals of slow development the really important years may be later still. Very bad influence may be fatal in childhood—but so also at any stage. Very good influences often leave little mark. The influence of example is probably always greatest after the mind has begun to be really reflective, not before. This at any rate is the conclusion which I am compelled to draw from the lives and confessions of the people whom I know best.



classes, of which one has many sub-varieties, the other none. The former may be described generally as the conception of education as the process of opening the door to the blossoming of the self. The latter may be described absolutely as the conception of education as a process of discipline and purging of the self. The former is usually considered to be in line with Plato's ideal. It is more often in flat contradiction to it. The latter is taken almost direct from Plato. The former is the only conception which is in fashion to-day. That is inevitable, because we all worship freedom, without knowing in the least what it means. Here are one or two definitions of the conception which is now most in favour:—

‘Education is the utilization of the infinite capacity of the individual human being to unfold itself from within.’

This is quoted by an authority <sup>1</sup> as the finest definition he has ever heard. His own is very similar:—

‘Education is the setting free of the power from within, thus enabling each human being to develop according to the true laws of its being.’

‘Education means opening the door to the blossoming of the spirit.’

And ‘The work of teachers is to set free the imprisoned splendour of the soul’.

One other definition may be given: ‘The aim of education is to put our children in an environment which we have made as good and as beautiful as it can be’.<sup>2</sup>

Now there are two very different things to be said about these definitions. First, they all appear to have the true Platonic ring; more than this, I have not the least doubt that, when interpreted fully by their authors, they are in agreement with much of the spirit of the Platonic ideal. This is certainly true of Mr. Paton's interpretation. Himself one of the wisest of teachers, he has always insisted that character training and religion are the all-important foundations of education; and he would, I am sure, accept Plato's principle that the real ‘blossoming of the spirit’ can only begin when the difficult task of subduing the unruly self is completed.

But the second thing to be said is this. These and similar definitions are everywhere accepted as meaning that we have

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. L. Paton.

<sup>2</sup> The last definition quoted is that of Professor Findlay, as given in the *Sociological Review* for October, 1924.



only to open wide the door, and the self will blossom forth as a fair flower, to sweeten and purify the world. Worse still, they are thought to justify us in the belief that all must be well if we can provide a clean and beautiful environment for the young. Some of the assumptions associated with the methods advocated by Signora Montessori are of this dangerous order. In expounding her own principles she likens the teacher to a good gardener, who would not dream of interfering with the growth of a flower, but knows that, given the good soil and the sunshine, it will grow unaided to its full beauty. We have therefore no right to interfere with the development of the growing soul, by restraining it or imposing our own standards upon it in any way. Now this is plainly misleading from beginning to end. The analogy is false. I may not be a very good gardener, but if I knew that a plant was likely to send up poison shoots as well as flowers, I should hold myself ready to restrict its growth very fiercely. And if it, or any part of it, showed close kinship with a weed in its growth, I should be very careful to prevent that part coming to flower at all. The inferences from the analogy are false too. Has a parent finished with the production of his or her children as soon as they are born? It is the parent's duty and privilege, and every good teacher's duty and privilege, to rub into the child's soul every scrap of good he can find in his own. Do we believe in our heritage of moral truths? How in heaven's name are we going to hand it on if we do not teach it to our children? Are the standards of our civilized life and thought of no value? Or do we think so badly of them that we dare not impose them upon the young? One hears much talk of the need of developing the power of self-expression. This is usually a polite name for self-assertion, which we have already found to be the fount of much evil to society. The most obvious need for most healthy children is a stern suppression of self-expression, until the day comes—if it ever comes—when they have only a good self to express. Can these educators not see that the self is an uneasy combination of possible god, actual man, and very real beast? If the beast is left unchained, what environment will save the man or give the god a chance of emerging?

Fortunately the exponents of these educational theories are often wiser than their dogmas. No teacher is content to desert his pupils where Professor Findlay's definition would apparently leave them; indeed, every good teacher turns round upon

the definition and makes it his aim to train the children to build up a good environment for themselves and learn how to use it well. And the most whole-hearted follower of Signora Montessori's principles whom I know is careful to supplement them by a very salutary discipline, enforced by judicious use of the cane. Of course they are right. The principles are intended to emphasize—and do very naturally over-emphasize—the needed correction of our faults in the past, when education was sometimes forgotten in the desire to suppress the iniquity of youth, and the blossoming faculties of childhood were discouraged by the fixed rules of an uncongenial curriculum.

A rather different conception is expressed by those reformers who would make it the chief aim of education to produce a fine attitude of mind in the young by the constant presentation of fine types in literature and history. This is rather a reversal of Aristotle's idea of purging the emotions by pity and fear through the presentation of tragedies on the stage. But Aristotle was thinking of adult citizens, not of children. For the latter, the emotional appeal of whatever is fine but not terrible is clearly more wholesome. Moreover, the aim is again in apparent harmony with part of the preliminary Platonic education, which was designed to wean the young soul away from the attraction of whatever things are unlovely, by accustoming it to the true beauty of the things that are pure and fine and simple. Heaven knows we need to-day, more than in Plato's time, a counter-attraction to the strange influences allowed to play unchecked upon the emotions of the young both within and without the picture palace. But can we fight fire with fire? Are the emotions a sure enough fulcrum upon which to rest the lever with which we are to turn the soul round to the light? This form of educational influence cannot be more than ancillary to greater influences. It is not itself the chief.

I have said that these modern ideals of education have a Platonic ring. Especially is this suggested by such phrases as 'opening the door to the blossoming of the soul'. But the resemblance is really illusory, and rests upon psychological conceptions which Plato would have rejected utterly. The aim of his 'ideal' education was simply this: so to order the human soul as to prepare it for the final emergence of the Spirit, or Spiritual faculty of seeing God which lies hidden deep within the soul. By the human soul he meant the tripartite equipment of reason, emotion and desire (man, watch-

dog, and beast) which is all the equipment we possess wherewith to grapple with our ordinary human problems. By education of this soul he meant only weaning it away from its natural attachment to the fascinations of this world (including all the fascinations of art and culture which we call good) and wheeling it round towards the light. The process of this education was a strict and austere discipline of life and environment ; no study of art or poetry ; no wealth or civilized complexity ; no attachment to any of the world's values. For the soul's perfection is a very simple thing : it is perfect when it is orderly, self-controlled, and wanting no new thing. There is no ' blossoming ' of this human soul : it is a garden of weeds presided over by the stern gardener, reason, whose sole task is to check all blossoming. What is there about it worth bringing to bloom—except emotional attachments and clevernesses of mind, both of which fasten us deeper in the moving play of this world of unreality ? There is no opening of a door, to set free any of the qualities of this soul. It is like a dangerous menagerie ; and our one hope of safety is to keep the door fast shut till the beasts within are tamed by reason and made obedient to reason's watch-dog, the trained and controlled emotions. Self-expression ? Whatever has the self got to express, except its desire for change and variety, which is always bad ? But when, by God's grace, the soul has become disciplined and well-ordered ; when the weeds of desire no longer try to flower, and the whole soul is in tune with simplicity and has been turned quite away from the kaleidoscope of the world's interests ; then and then only there may come the awakening of the ' Spirit that lies hid within the soul ' ; then and only then the door may be opened, and this Spirit may ascend into its own world, the other world of unchanging good. But this opening of the door is not for childhood or youth or even middle age. The preliminary ordering of the soul occupies more than half a lifetime ; at 50 perhaps the door may be safely opened.

If any modern idealist has the hardihood to say that this is what he means by his definition of education, I will admire his bravery, and will hold myself ready to offer my sympathy when the world's ridicule falls upon him. If any modern reformer has the hardihood to advocate the Platonic education seriously, I will say, with Plato, that no education short of this can save society. But I must also say—again with Plato—that society is not likely to grasp its salvation, though a very



few individuals may do so, one here and one there. Even Plato never harboured our hopes. He never dreamed of educating 90 per cent. of his society—or even 10 per cent. If the vast majority could be kept in order, that were achievement enough. He was too profound an individualist to imagine that all of us are fit for real education.

And is he not herein wiser than many of us who hope for so much from our tiny scheme of education? It is good to give to every child whatever training of good faculty it is fit for, as well as all possible suppression of bad faculty. It is essential to give to every human being a chance of travelling as far as it can along the road to knowledge and understanding and the myriad interests of an awakened mind. But can all take the road? Ask the psychologist and the eugenist their opinion; discount their natural exaggeration as you will; you are still left facing the sad fact that, in our highly civilized societies, nearly 2 per cent. of the people are feeble-minded, 10 per cent. are so stupid as to be very nearly unteachable, and over 50 per cent. are incapable of mental development beyond the stage of a normal child of 12. Education will do something for all of these. But it will not transform them, nor cause them to produce more promising children in their turn. Many of them must be 'kept in order'—little more; some will defy all order, and endanger society's good so long as they are free.

But still more important is the deeper fact—which no percentages can express—that the soul of every one of us contains a potent force for evil greater than any force of the atom. Education is the last thing it needs, for it is far too easily educable. No effort is needed to give it expression: it opens the door and issues forth by its own unaided strength. And it is all anti-social, for its nature is desire and its only home is the self. No school can alter it, though good influence keeps it in check. No good environment can reform it; yet it is untrue to say that it is unaffected by environment. Opportunity and suggestion are its chief allies, and if the environment can be cleansed of these its power for evil will be lessened. But civilized society means fuller opportunity and more varied suggestion; and what educational influence can control these? For this reason, the one element which needs emphasizing to-day is just the element which it is fashionable to neglect: discipline, and yet more discipline. Faced by the world as it is to-day—distorted by war, but struggling as hard as ever to

become again a vast armed camp, split into sections and divided by hatred and envy—will we not be wise to exalt the ideal of subordination to law, control of the untamed man, and self-suppression, instead of talking so much and so confidently about helping the self to unfold itself from within ?

And yet, as a firm believer in education who owes to it an unpayable debt, I feel that it is a little churlish to attack other believers whose only fault is that they expect too much. After all, they are on the side of the angels, and opposed to the many who are eager to degrade education into a process of artful preparation for money-making. Now there is no objection to training—at the appropriate time—any boy or girl to make a living in commerce or industry. Specialized vocational training may be necessary in a highly specialized world. But we have no right to call it education. If I wish to train my son to be a juggler, I shall not pretend that I am giving him a physical education, although some of his physical aptitudes will doubtless be led out. And I shall rightly be blamed for neglect of his physical education if I subordinate it to the specialized training. But this is just what many people wish to do with the education of the soul. It is expensive ; it is a long and tedious process ; they dare not ask that it shall be cut down in duration, so they ask instead that it shall be converted into special training whose results may quickly return in cash. An American writer <sup>1</sup> has described this tendency in its true colours : there is nothing to add to her criticism.

‘ Our present method of highly specialized education is a prolonged and persistent assault upon the human soul. In the years when we should be putting into the hands of our young people the keys which will open for them the rich treasures of art and literature and history and the other means to culture, we say instead (and we say it way down the grades now) “ Tell us what you want to do for a living, and we will eliminate from your training everything that does not lead directly to that profession or trade ”. That there shall be anything in the kit of the traveller to help him across the deserts and bogs of life that lie before us all, regardless of what we may be doing for a livelihood, does not enter into the plan at all. If you are going to be a stenographer, all you need is a commercial education. It would be obviously a waste of time for an office worker to have any kinship with the great, the heroic, the inspiring forces of life.’

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca N. Porter : ‘ Adventures in a Fiction Factory,’ *Scribner's Magazine*, July, 1923.

Against the tendency thus flagellated every educational idealist is fighting. Perhaps those are fighting hardest who have made the cause of adult education their especial care. I have said a few pages back that they expect too much from this alone. And yet I am inclined to recant, and say that one cannot exaggerate one's hopes from such a movement, so long as it is based on firm faith and inspired by a fine enthusiasm. Their aim at least admits of no criticism. It is—to enlarge the understanding of life and to widen the horizon of interest, by strengthening the power of the mind to grasp knowledge and overcome difficulties. Or perhaps the leaders of adult education in this country would accept the definition of aim proclaimed by the Youth Movement in Germany, where some wisdom at any rate is growing out of tribulation. It is this: 'To make the individual a thinking, free, independent, responsible human being, by recasting the old scale of values, and fostering industry and a sense of duty.' The definition begs many questions, no doubt; very much must turn upon the new scale of values to be substituted for the old. And how are we to make the new scale a living part of the individual's outfit? But the aim expressed is clear enough; and it stands the double test of harmony with the good of the individual and the good of society. Any *good* education must aim at producing individuals who will be happy—and will be good citizens. Their happiness depends upon work, strong interests, capacity for full human relationships, and devotion to an ideal purpose. All of these are provided for in the definition. The social need is for citizens in whom self-assertion is dominated all through life by respect for the rights of others. This is not so clearly included; it may be implied in the reference to responsibility and duty, but it needs more explicit statement. One need not cavil, however, at the imperfections of the definition; the aim is plain enough, and it is wholly good. If that aim is followed throughout the world, then indeed a reform is going on by comparison with which all our political reorganizations are of no importance.

Yet the great difficulty remains. Who shall ensure that the aim will be followed? There is nothing in life harder than to keep enthusiasm alive, and save our ideals from sinking to oblivion in the sea of practical necessities. And here is the real crux of education. *Quis educabit ipsos educatores?* Or rather, who will find the teachers we need? Like poets, they

are born not made ; there are many who teach, but few real teachers. Training Colleges cannot produce them ; high salaries will not create them. Without them, all our talk about what education might be and do is almost meaningless. We shall doubtless give our ' higher education ' to 90 per cent. of our population before long. But there will be no revolution of their souls or transformation of their minds ; there will be no new manifestation of better life or clearer vision—until the teachers are themselves exemplars of the better life and so inspired by the clearer vision that no boy or girl can fail to catch something of it by contact with them. And even then, is the reformation so sure ? Socrates was one of the great teachers of the world ; and he had the rare power of being able to bring to the birth the good in the pupil's soul. Plato was his pupil ; but Alcibiades also sat at his feet. And was not Judas one of the Twelve ?

So far, my argument seems to range me on the side of the Eugenist, whose attitude is expressed, in an extreme form and rather contemptuously, by the remark that ' education is to man what manure is to the pea '. Well, let us admit that the reforming power of education is limited by the inborn limitations of its material. How does this affect the relation of education to the advancement of social good ?

I suppose that each of us discovers, eventually, that his every faculty has some fixed point beyond which it cannot pass. We may call this the limit of our educability.<sup>1</sup> The most familiar example of this is the rather subtle thing which (in relation to games of skill) is called ' a good eye ', and which implies a certain co-ordination of sight and nerves and muscles. If I possess this in high degree, I can, with practice and good teaching, excel, not only in games, but in most kinds of manual skill, from carpentering to type-writing. But if I possess a ' bad ' eye or a ' poor ' eye, then a lifetime's practice under the best teachers will not enable me to hit a ball quite truly or do anything else with skill and exactness. My ' handicap ' will never be a low one : and its level is fixed by my innate limitation of faculty.

In the use of the mind and its powers, the same variations of inborn limits are obvious. For quite 95 per cent. of us <sup>2</sup> there

<sup>1</sup> This is not the same thing as the ' fixed potential of mental energy ' insisted upon by Dr. Spearman in his book *The Abilities of Man*. But it is doubtless connected with it.

<sup>2</sup> The remaining 5 per cent. have also a limit, of course ; but they may not live long enough to reach it,—or become conscious of it.



is some point beyond which we never shall nor can advance in, let us say, mathematical reasoning or even logical ratiocination. So too in artistic appreciation and performance: we are all graded—for life—by the limitations of our inborn capacities.

All this is obvious enough. Obvious too are the inferences to be drawn. No education whatever can carry any of us beyond the fixed limit; and the application of educational effort is sheer waste if this fixed point is not taken into account. It is hardly necessary to refer, by way of illustration, to the millions of hours which used to be wasted in teaching impossible performers to play the piano; much more serious have been and are the effects of neglect of the limit in the preparation of the young for their life's work. I have known boys whose 'eye' was plainly poor, apprenticed for seven years to a skilled trade in which they could not possibly excel; I have seen girls launched on a career as typists whose limit of skill was too low for any real proficiency to be possible. Can we not all point to similar examples in every kind of mental work? And the practical moral is equally obvious. Uniform education is doubtless justified for the very young, if only because we rightly refuse to admit that any normal mind is incapable of learning the three R's and a few other essentials of contact with the intelligent world to-day. But uniform education should certainly cease at an early age—much earlier than 14 or 15; and secondary education should be based from the beginning on the consideration of each child's innate limitations. In this at least the psychologist ought to be able to help us to lessen waste.

But this, I confess, carries me beyond my province. Returning to the inborn limitations, physical and mental, about which there is no doubt at all, I would suggest that a similar 'limit of educability' exists in the matter of moral and social aptitudes. I do not mean merely that some of us are much more 'born liars' than others, just as some of us are by nature more cruel, more crooked, and more selfish.<sup>1</sup> And I do not at all mean to assert that any of us have a fixed limit for the

<sup>1</sup> There *are* such differences, of course; and we usually explain them by heredity, using that form of it least likely to give offence, which is called the 'grandfather theory'. This can be quite satisfactorily applied until one gets back to Cain and Abel; and in their case, since Eve has already enough to answer for, we are compelled to attribute to Adam the germs of all the good and evil tendencies which came to fruition in his descendants.

development of self-control ; this we generally refuse to allow, since we must assume that every normal personality possesses enough will-power for the proper management of the personal life. But I am thinking rather of that positive quality or faculty upon which so much social virtue depends : that is, sympathy, or feeling for others, or the capacity to identify oneself in idea and feeling and ultimately in action, with another person. In this I am convinced we differ enormously from one another ; and the differences are fixed (within limits, no doubt) very much as are the differences of physical and mental strength and skill.

If so, the fullest education cannot reform society or the individual beyond a certain point. The appeal of example and precept, the provision of carefully arranged environment in school and home, the holding up of ideals in history or literature,—all will fail to lift those whose sympathy is defective above the level of a life whose horizon is blocked on every side by the simple vision of self. Indeed, the ‘ blossoming of the self ’ at which education is to aim, will, in some cases, make the task of social reformation much harder ; can we deny that much of our social difficulty arises from just those masterful but essentially anti-social characters who have been ‘ educated ’ to their full development by a far too encouraging environment ? But whatever its limits may be, there is no doubt that the social capacity of every individual, based as it is upon innate sympathy, should be drawn out or educated to its fullest power. This is the true social education—the most vital of all kinds of education, and the most neglected.

For the general aim of education is always stamped by the dominant interests and prejudices of that section of society which controls it. This must be so—and should be so.<sup>1</sup> At

<sup>1</sup> Many people will dispute this, especially in view of the recent attempts in several American States to rule out from all their schools any teaching of the doctrines of evolution. As a teacher, I of course desire to interpret as I think best the subjects I teach ; but as a citizen, I reluctantly admit that my society has a right to say no. If the majority of my fellows feel very strongly about anything, and believe very sincerely that my teaching of it will inculcate opposite views in my pupils (who are their children), then of course they will object. They *must* object. The only valid criticism of the citizens of Tennessee must be based upon our regret that there are still so many people with so little insight into the reality of religion as to believe that it has any vital connexion at all with this or that theory of evolution.

the present time, most of our education is designed to lead up to the single end of successful *individual* achievement : that is what we care most about, as parents interested in our children's future, and as citizens interested in our country's success in the pursuit of wealth and greatness. The natural result is an over-exaltation of the self-seeking qualities, and a failure to develop the social qualities of the population.

It is sometimes said that the best brains are, on the whole, discovered, brought out of obscurity, and utilized for the best work, by a process of natural selection which has been operative during the past century or more. The great majority of such brains are therefore now to be found in the upper classes. The cream of capacity in all grades has gradually been encouraged to rise, and, in the era of industrial freedom, has actually risen. Consequently, people who imagine that the proletariat still contains quite as high a percentage as the upper classes of clever heads only waiting for a fair chance to rise, are altogether mistaken. There is probably not much undiscovered capacity of a very high grade left in the 'lower orders'. This comforting doctrine of aristocracy may or may not be true. I suspect that it overstates the case very seriously. For the process of both rising and sinking is rather an uncertain one—even in America ; in most countries it is both too uncertain and too slow to have produced its full effect in the very short period during which freedom of movement has been at all real. But the point I am concerned with is just this : we may have developed *unsocial* capacity to the full : we may have drawn to the top and utilized most of the available brains adapted to economic success : the process of doing so would certainly be encouraged by the gods we really worship, and by the scheme of a successful life which those gods uphold. But *social* capacity—in the sense of capacity to be a really good citizen or social member—has been neglected. And *that* capacity does lie dormant in the 'lower orders' to an extent undreamed of by most of us. It is the untapped reservoir of the forces of social advance.

I do not, of course, mean to suggest that the poorer classes have herein a greater capacity than the more successful classes. But quite obviously our process of social evolution (with our education as a part of it) has favoured the rise of other kinds of capacity—the individualistic virtues—and not of this ; and, while all classes are still an unknown quantity so far as their

social sympathy goes, there is at least some probability that some of the successful 'arrivistes' in any society have rather less of it than those who have not 'arrived'. And, among the vast masses who have not yet arrived anywhere, there is an amount of true social co-operation which is, I think, hardly known to the educated classes whose life is rather apart and aloof. I do not refer only to the well-known kindness of the poor to one another; I am thinking rather of the active interest in their group and its welfare shown by working men and women in every working class district,—expressed, too, not in words only, but in sustained activities and services gladly given in their leisure time. The extent of this active sympathy is familiar to any who have lived in close contact with the hand-workers in England, at any rate, and, I imagine, in other countries no less.

How then shall this social sympathy be educated? Not, I think, in schools and colleges; not even, I fear, in Sunday schools. It is the fashion to-day to include in the school curriculum classes in Citizenship, especially in the upper grades of girls' schools. Usually this teaching takes the form of instruction in the mechanism of government and the significance of political institutions. This is inevitable, since, as a subject in a curriculum, it must be both definite and informative. The knowledge imparted is useful; a really good teacher will doubtless impart far more than mere instruction; will, indeed, stimulate here and there a vital interest in the political and social life of the community. But even at its best we can hardly expect the teaching to produce good citizenship in the very real sense we are now considering, any more than we can expect the teaching of ethics to produce good conduct. For the interest we want is something really independent of academic knowledge: an awakening of feeling and purpose which shall itself lead on to fuller understanding of conditions. And this development—like the growth of all our strongest interests—belongs far less to childhood and youth than to the period of active life which follows. Therefore the true social education must also belong to this period; and this means that social life must be the school and society the teacher, bent upon awakening in us all a real interest *in itself*. And before this teaching can really begin, there must be a different set of the main currents of social interests: of those interests, that is, which are normally thrust upon us as members of society.



I have known one or two men—and three or four women—whose lives have followed their conviction that the most interesting of all ‘hobbies’ is the interest in social work. But our upper classes as a rule do not share the conviction or imitate the action. Their real interests, centred in their own work and its success, are revealed by the countless conferences and conventions, societies and fraternities, into which most of their surplus energy is thrown; and these activities are for the most part focused upon the success of their profession or business or trade or class. It is good, no doubt, for the professional or commercial progress aimed at. But with it there goes a rather pathetic neglect of the work of social organization and improvement. In many of the most thriving communities, local administration is handed over to a rather peculiar group of quasi-busybodies, and of the mass of the citizens, barely half are interested enough to record their votes at the triennial elections. The administration itself is only saved by the efficiency of the paid specialists who really manage it. In what is called voluntary administration (and this covers a vast and important field) the interest is even less, and not too much respect is paid to the very devoted individuals who do their best at it, unpaid and unthanked. Is this a mark of abundant social sympathy? Or is it not proof that that sympathy is either dormant or non-existent?

This is what I mean by asserting that our society (you and I, that is), must change its attitude and rouse its own interest in itself, before we can hope for a social education worthy of the name.

The welfare of our neighbours—all of them—ought to be the dominant interest in every citizen’s life, next to his own and that of his family group. That it hardly operates at all as a real interest in the ordinary city-dweller’s life is shown clearly enough by the things we choose to do and read and think and talk about. A sensational event touches us—because it is sensational; but the Press, which is a fairly shrewd interpreter of our interests, knows better than to force our attention to the deeper but less sensational movements of the life around us. It is we, therefore, the adult citizens, who must go to school again, and collectively furnish the needed education for each other.

For it must be remembered always that the *direction* of our interests is usually determined for us by our whole social

environment rather than by ourselves for ourselves. And the chief determinants are not our education in school or even in college, but the influences of later life : the profession or business upon which most of our thought is concentrated, the associates with whom we are most in contact, the needs which we imagine to be most important in our lives, and the leisure occupations into which we are drawn. We talk and think 'shop' : it is our occupation which determines the shop. The real or imagined needs of our life fill much of our thought : these too are given, in many cases, though under far more alterable conditions. Fashion and example, public opinion and, still more, popular prejudices, unite with our own tastes in determining the extent of our interest in art and literature, in sport and recreation, in politics and world progress. Throughout, we tend to follow the suggestions of our society or of that part of it in which we are most merged ; at its call we choose and develop and become absorbed in this or that interest. We sometimes blame women for taking a rather disproportionate interest in dress and appearance : but can they help it, when society emphatically tells them that they are expected to be (as of course they are) the attractive sex, when every neighbour assures them that it is their duty to live up to the expectation, and when their interest is over-stimulated by all the artifices which can be devised by the commerce whose profit depends upon it ? And are women very different from men in their absorption in interests which are essentially trivial ?

In effect, therefore, we must conclude that whatever seeds of interest may be sown in our minds by direct education, the crop which flourishes in after-life is due to a different sowing, determined in part by the right and natural circumstances of our work and our needs, in part by the wrong and unnatural dictates of all kinds of artificialities and by our worship of false gods. We even seem to create for ourselves an environment in which the seeds of the best interests shall fall upon stony ground, lest they should grow up and trouble us too much. For let it be admitted that real social sympathy is not—at first—a very comfortable possession. In a rather unfair world, it is a disturbing influence to the possessor and not pleasing to his friends. Why look for trouble until it comes ? Why spoil your cakes and ale by thinking of those who are hungry and thirsty ? Why not be a comfortable optimist, who is convinced that all is well because he refuses to look round the

corner? Above all, why endanger your eternal salvation by coquetting with ideas which look dangerously like Socialism? Thus common sense erects danger signals to keep us all from straying outside the fold of orthodox complacency. And of course it *is* common sense—in a world in which individual success or achievement is the great end for each of us. Also, since common sense can only be overcome by the sense which is truer but rarer, I am not arrogant enough to attempt its overthrow. But, until it is superseded by a better sense, we shall be without that co-operation of effort based upon real social sympathy, by which alone (as we all really know) the individual lives of you and me, and the relations between us which make the social life, can be raised to a higher level.

And yet, from many points of view, this conclusion appears to be too gloomy. In spite of all hindrances, social sympathy of a most vital kind is growing in all classes. The 'awareness' of society becomes more marked every day in reference to pain in any quarter: there is no form of suffering for which sympathy is wanting, whenever the facts are known. Most decent citizens are really interested in some cause or other whose aim is to lessen evil and increase good; most citizens are ready to make sacrifices—far more than they now do—if their interest is aroused. One wonders therefore why so little is done to draw out the vast reserves of sympathy and to make active the dormant goodwill. Is it too much to say that, if one-tenth of the effort now directed to arousing our interest in saleable goods were directed to educating our interest in the social good, we should very soon rise to a higher plane of neighbour feeling and community feeling?

In his book, *The Great Society*, Mr. Graham Wallas has dealt admirably with the problem of the organization of thought and the organization of will. But he should have added a section on the organization of goodwill. I cannot make good the deficiency. But I can hardly close this chapter without indicating one—perhaps the greatest—of our lost opportunities. I have already referred to the Press as an interpreter of the general interests, which it is bound to follow rather than lead if it is to be financially successful. If the daily newspaper must give the public only what it wants, then its function as a possible educator seems to be severely limited. But is there not good cause to suspect that the leaders of newspaper manage-

ment are after all wrong in their interpretation? On the one hand, it is difficult to believe that *any* public is on so low a level as is assumed by its purveyors of news. How low this assumed level is may be gauged by the confessions of a reporter, recently made public in an American magazine.<sup>1</sup> Among the principles enunciated for the guidance of correspondents all over the world, the most important is given in the condensed form of 'Think stuff unwanted'. This is amplified by a list of popular interests, given in the strange order of 'women, liquor, wealth, religion, science, and immorality'. And finally, to make sure that correspondents shall not waste their attention on trifles, there is the curt direction 'How many corpses? That tells whether it is a story or not'.

Now we are bound to allow that the managers of the popular Press know their own business. They know that circulation will fall off if they pitch their standard higher. But this does not mean that the interest of the public, as a whole, does not rise above that of the avid readers of the pictorial Police News. It merely means that there is a moderately large number of marginal readers on a very low level of taste, whose patronage will shift to whatever paper best satisfies that taste. And it is very possibly the case that the standard of the competitive Press is largely determined by competition for this marginal patronage, with the result that all of us are compelled to adapt ourselves to the tastes of the minority.

Further, it is at any rate plausible to suggest that the popular Press has first adopted an unnecessarily low standard which it has assumed to be general, and has then accustomed us to this standard and caused us to acquiesce in it.<sup>2</sup> The influence of use and wont is nowhere so strong as in the formation of our daily habits: there is no reason why one nation should like eggs and bacon for breakfast and another nation hate them, except the fact that we like what we are accustomed to. So with the daily newspaper. We accept it: we do not ask whether it really contains the best food for our minds; and in a very short time we are ready to resent any change in its usual features. But it is *not* our choice, nor does it represent our real tastes. Nine out of ten of us would become equally attached to a better type of mental nourishment—if it were provided. And this is borne out by a significant fact. In the

<sup>1</sup> The *American Mercury*, February, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> This is almost certainly what has happened in the case of the Cinema.



United States, sensational journalism has been carried to the extremest lengths, and the morning and evening papers are, as a rule, not indicative of the existence of a public which cares deeply for anything which is not sensational. Yet, in that very same country, most of the weekly and monthly magazines are superior in style and tone and subject to those of any other country in the world ; and even the most popular of them all, with a circulation of nearly three millions, furnishes its readers week by week with articles of nation-wide and world-wide interest, side by side with stories which, to say the least, are on a higher literary level than those published in the more expensive English monthlies.

There is, I think, no doubt about the power of the Press to create *and make general* new standards of taste and interest. Expert advertisers <sup>1</sup> have discovered that ' the continuing body of advertising has produced a receptive state of mind ' among all of us. ' It has created a public, almost co-extensive with the population of the country, that reveals amazing willingness to adopt anything, or, to put it more emphatically, a determination not to be left behind—a sort of mad scramble to have, do, and be whatever is popular at the moment.' Indeed, there is something terrifying in the speed with which new ideas and new fashions spread, and the unanimity with which they are adopted. The greatest of all advertising agents—the Press—can hardly pretend that it is *unable* to shift the general interest of citizens to a higher level. Is it then unreasonable to hope that, at any moment, a new era of Newspaper influence may dawn, in which the Press may really be the educator of our latent *citizen* interests, instead of the constant feeder of the morbid interests which thrive only because they are so well fed ?

<sup>1</sup> The quotations are from the *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1927 ; article by E. E. Calkin.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PROBLEM OF THE UNFIT

I HAVE already suggested that, of all reformers, the Eugenist and the Psychologist seem to stand on surest ground. They at least take as their starting point the fact that the good of society hinges upon the qualities of the individual souls of which society is composed. If these souls are good, no blows of fortune can shake society from its good estate. If they are not good, no ingenuity, no science, no purging of environment can save society from evil.

The Eugenist, like all biologists, would reject my reference to the individual souls, and would substitute the phrase 'qualities of the individual', physical as well as mental and moral. His estimate of the relative value of different qualities is perhaps a little indiscriminating: physical energy, mental alertness, and moral restraint seem with him to rank on the same level. Often he does not appear to care what sort of a soul the individual possesses provided he has the qualities which ensure his rising to the top. Power, therefore—power to succeed in society as it now is—sometimes seems to be his ideal. But I think most Eugenists would claim, with some justice, the right to repudiate this suggestion. Their ideal at any rate is a society composed of individuals who are fit to live a healthy, strenuous and morally progressive life; and even a philosopher can hardly cavil at that.

Let me present the Eugenist's case as fairly as I can. In every society there are, in the main, three grades or classes. First, there is a rather small class of people who direct, control, invent and improve things—are leaders, in fact, in all activities. There is, secondly, a large class of people who, without any special powers of initiative or leadership, carry on the work and life of society with fair success. And, thirdly, there is a class of people who are or tend to be rather a dead weight, hindering not helping, incapable of doing their fair share of work or of playing a healthy part in society's life, many of them

actively opposing or dragging back against any progressive movement. The three grades may best be characterized in this way : the first comprises the leaders or pioneers and protectors of civilization ; the second comprises the people who are fit for civilized life and capable of some progression ; the third consists of individuals who are unfit for civilization and tend to become its active enemies.

These three classes are not grouped with any accuracy in our caste or class systems. An upper class may contain many individuals of the third grade, the second and third classes may and doubtless do contain some individuals of the higher grades. But in the most advanced modern societies the grading, even though it is clumsy and unfair, does roughly correspond with the true order of social worth. Now the important facts are these : First, all the three grades tend quite regularly to breed true to type. Secondly, the highest class breeds at a very much slower rate than the others ; the lowest class tends to breed at a very much faster rate than either of the others ; and the disproportion in their numbers becomes more marked each year.<sup>1</sup>

The social consequences of this disproportion may be illustrated very simply. It is said that, if you take any thousand Harvard graduates now living, you find by statistical evidence that, at their present rate of breeding, they will have in all only fifty descendants living two centuries hence. But if you take any thousand ignorant aliens in Boston now living, they will, at the end of two centuries from now, have 100,000 descendants living. The persistence of type, or the fact of type breeding true to type, may be illustrated by the very familiar instance of the Juke family, and that of Jonathan Edwards.

### *I. The Juke Family.*

The founder was born in New York in 1720. He had two sons, who both married degenerate women. By 1877 the seventh generation had been reached, and of this 1,200 were traced. Of these latter, the record was as follows :—

300 had died in infirmaries.

310 were professional paupers, who had already spent a total of 2,300 years in almshouses.

<sup>1</sup> Note the very close analogy to Plato's three classes in the State. Plato has been called, not unfairly, the first Eugenist. How far he travelled beyond Eugenics, and how far deeper was his meaning, I have tried to show in my book *The Message of Plato*.

440 were physically wrecked by their own wickedness and disease.

More than half the women were prostitutes.

130 were convicted criminals. 60 were thieves and 7 murderers.

Only 20 had learned a trade, 10 of these in a prison.

And between them they had already cost the State over \$1,250,000.

In 1915 the ninth generation of the family had been reached. They were now scattered all over the country ; but 2,820 of them were traced. The same characteristics were found to be accompanying them everywhere ; the cost of the family to the State had now risen to over \$2,500,000. And, most significant fact of all, out of approximately 600 feeble-minded and epileptic Jukes then living, there were only 3 in custodial care.

## *II. The Jonathan Edwards family.*

The founder was the well-known early Puritan in America. In 1900 there were 1,394 of his descendants known and traced. And their record was as follows :—

1,295 were college graduates.

13 were presidents of important colleges.

65 were professors in colleges, besides many principals in other educational institutions.

60 were physicians—many eminent.

100 were clergymen or missionaries.

75 were officers in the army or navy.

60 were prominent authors.

100 at least were lawyers.

30 were judges.

80 were in Public offices (including one Vice-President of the United States).

3 were Senators.

Several were members of Congress.

Many were successful men of business.

And not one was known to have ever been convicted of crime.<sup>1</sup>

NOTE :—

The significance of the records must, in the case of both families, be discounted in this way. The descendants of the Jukes

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by L. Stoddart, from *Applied Eugenics*, by Popenhoe and Johns, pp. 161-2.



have, on the whole, been subjected persistently to the evil influence of bad environment; the descendants of the Edwards ancestors have, on the whole, been subjected to the favourable influence of a good environment. And it is claimed (e.g. by Dr. H. H. Horne in his *Idealism in Education*), that the members of the Jukes family, being isolated from a proper social environment, contaminated each other and became worse by imitation, and that 'the children of one couple that moved out of the Jukes influence grew up much as others'. But, when all reasonable allowance has been made for the environmental effects, it still remains true that the Juke family has shown a quite remarkable inability to adapt itself to any environment except a bad one, while the Edwards family has shown an equally remarkable inability to tolerate any environment except a good one.

It will be noticed that the Edwards family, though increasing more slowly than the family of Jukes, has nevertheless continued to increase down to the present day. But it is now becoming certain that, while all families of the Juke type are multiplying their stock with undiminished recklessness, families of the Edwards type are, with very few exceptions, leaving fewer and fewer descendants. In other words, the bad stocks are permitted not only to persist but to multiply rapidly, while the good stocks not only do not persist but allow themselves to die out. And the significance is just this: civilized society is increasing every year the number of its dead weights and active enemies, at the same time that it is diminishing the number of its builders and supporters. And no scheme of reform—least of all any manipulation of environment—helps us at all. Environment cannot affect the type, which is innate and unalterable even as the germ-plasm which contains it is innate and unalterable. Some few reforms may help us to neutralize the evil effects of the social poisoning; but if reform takes the popular shape of easing conditions for the individuals of the lowest grades, it increases rather than lessens our dangers. For it makes it easier for the bad elements to survive—and breed.

Social evolution, therefore, is being settled for us by biological causes. The capable citizens are dying out, by a process of sheer class suicide; the less competent, and above all the least competent, are increasing by the natural process of prolific

breeding. And as the less competent elements are by their nature less fit for civilization, even if not innately predisposed to dislike it and prefer barbarism, it follows inexorably that civilized society is, at present, 'evolving' towards ruin.

There is but one hope of escape. It is futile to urge that, if the existing highest grade disappeared root and branch (as it is fast doing) its place would be taken by equally good material from the lower grades. The supply of first grade material is, in any society at any given moment, strictly limited; and every kind of test goes to show that about four-fifths of that limited supply is really—even in an 'acquisitive' society based upon money-making—to be found in the highest class. The supply can only be increased considerably by increasing the individuals representing the stocks which now contain the first grade material. We are left, therefore, with two, and only two, remedies, both of which are necessary. The individuals of the highest class *must* be induced to breed less sparingly; the individuals of the lowest class *must* (in many cases at least) be restrained from breeding at all.

Upon these facts and principles is founded the very cautious and moderate Eugenic policy of its ablest exponents. In the main it is purely negative, aiming simply at the prevention of the worst kind of *dysgeneia*. That is to say, we are urged to prevent the multiplication of such stocks as that of the Juke family by the only possible means—the segregation of the individuals who are obviously rendered unfit for parentage by feeble-mindedness and (perhaps) persistent and recurrent criminality. Beyond this their policy is—as it must be—less definite and even more simple. We must aim at the establishment, by education and the spread of knowledge, and most of all by the awakening of *care* for the welfare of the race, of an Eugenic conscience whose influence will be threefold. First, it will prevent us, in whatever grade we may be, from allowing what we know to be transmissible taints to be perpetuated by marriage and procreation of children. Secondly, it will, by reinforcing our natural desire to mate with good stock, induce all of us, parents as well as young men and women, to pay rather more attention to eugenic *worth* when we consider the eligibility of any one as a husband or a wife. And thirdly, it may (alas! one cannot say it will) foster some slight sense of duty to the race, to posterity, and to civilization, and so counteract those arch-enemies to the increase of the best stocks—

love of ease, of luxury, and of freedom from any burdens which may hinder our enjoyments.

The 'negative' policy of the Eugenist hardly admits of criticism. The case against the unrestrained multiplication of the obvious degenerates has been proved to the hilt, statistically and medically; and the principle enunciated by Dr. Inge is not open to question: if the operation of natural selection is suspended, rational selection must take its place. The difficulty of carrying out the policy beyond very narrow limits is, of course, enormous. Up to a point there is no difficulty in determining who must be included in the class of totally unfit. Beyond that point it is hard to pass without submitting ourselves to a tyranny of specialists which is not likely to be tolerated. But even difficulties as threatening as this have a way of resolving themselves in the face of real necessity. Further, it is doubtless possible to argue that the Eugenist is a dangerous fanatic: given an inch he will take an ell. But I think no philosopher worthy of his salt will allow much weight to the 'thin end of the wedge' argument. For he knows that all active human beings, individually and collectively, are for ever opening doors and exploring new passages which, if followed far, would lead to destruction, but which, if followed just so far as the light lasts, help to bring both life and air into the crowded house of existence. Experiments must be made: and our safeguard is the restraining action of that instinct of safety upon which in the last resort most of our life depends. Social and individual life alike are full of 'thin ends of the wedge'; we live among beginnings of law, beginnings of habit and custom, beginnings of institution and practice, many of which would ruin us if logically followed out to the end. But we live among them safely: we even thrive upon them.

The positive policy is also, on the face of it, beyond criticism. We are not likely to get too much conscience into society, nor too much thought of the morrow in relation to anything really vital. By all means let us get all we can. It is certain that we simply cannot afford to be careless about the cleanliness of the stock which we help to perpetuate; it is perhaps equally certain that posterity cannot afford that we should be careless about the numbers of healthy descendants whom we leave to help it.

But this does not exhaust the subject. There are more than one or two comments which need to be made on the general



arguments and deductions of most Eugenists. The criticisms which follow are directed not against their declared policy, but against the rather extravagant hopes and perhaps equally extravagant fears which underlie their doctrines.

I have praised them because they are individualists, trusting only to the improvement of the individual units for the improvement of the mass. But their individualism is crude and clumsy. Their analysis of the individual is superficial: they measure quality by the roughest of standards. Survival value has a useful meaning, no doubt; but you have only begun to define it when you take as its mark success or eminence in any given condition of society. I am very ready to grant that, even in an 'acquisitive' society, the people who can rise to the top and stay there for two or three generations must possess other good qualities besides energy, pushfulness and shrewdness. But whatever may be the dominant note of society, whether war or commerce or learning, land-power or trade-power or science-power, its eminent individuals can never be labelled 'good' or 'valuable' without much deeper scrutiny. I fancy all Eugenists are aristocrats by instinct: and that is a virtue. But some of them are also snobs: and that is less admirable. Excellence for them is established by the possession of 'energy, ability, talent or genius'. But if that is all, the perpetuation of excellence is as likely to ruin as to save society. After David, Solomon (surely the perfect man—eugenically!); but after Solomon, Rehoboam and Abijam. The stock of Eli was able and eminent; but the good of Israel required its extermination, not its survival. Is character so small a matter that it may be left out of account? Or is it not the case that the whole of a man's social value depends finally upon the hardly definable texture of his soul which causes him to find favour with the Lord? There is no 'Who's Who' of good people; and even if there were, there is no certainty that *that* stock breeds true to type.

A second defect in much Eugenic argument arises from the same aristocratic prejudice which I have referred to. One cannot but feel that most Eugenists lack either an intimate knowledge of the worth of many of the humbler individuals of their society, or the readiness to admit its importance for civilization. I have no hesitation at all in asserting that the hand-working classes in England on the whole excel the more successful classes in the virtues of patience, fortitude, gener-



osity and kindliness—virtues of no mean social value ; while their toughness and adaptability are beyond question. In physique they compare unfavourably—though the stock has probably never yet had a fair chance of showing its capacity. In mental alertness and quickness of grasp and decision they are undoubtedly inferior. I have noted before the estimate accepted by some Eugenists that, in most countries, only one-fifth of the total ‘ ability ’ is to be found in the lower grades or masses. This may be perfectly true—of the qualities last mentioned. It is emphatically not true of general social worth as indicated by other qualities which, though not measurable, are not less important to a good social life. And, apart from a small mentally and morally unsound section about which there is no question, it is simply absurd to infer that the ‘ lower orders ’ or the non-eminent and unsuccessful masses are in any valid sense unfit for civilization or incapable of bearing its burdens.<sup>1</sup> I would very cheerfully entrust the future of our civilization to the care of most of the working men and women I know, and their children. They might even improve it.

The third criticism cuts deeper. The Eugenist generally accepts civilization as the goodly heritage to be safeguarded and handed on,—civilization, that is, in the sense of the quickly growing mass of complexities which we believe ensure for us the fullness of life. We—the able minority—are the true upholders of this heritage, because we understand it, appreciate it, can manage it and add to it. Those others are its enemies, because they lag behind. Their incapacities clog the wheels of its progress, their inertia is a drag upon it, their perverseness an ever-present threat to its stability. Against this civilization no word may be raised. Simplicity is anathema, and praise of simplicity a crime. Even a Tolstoy must needs be proved a degenerate because he loved simplicity.

Well, this civilization is threatened ; its champions are dying out, wilfully ; its foes are increasing, automatically. The end is very near. Yes, it is threatened. But is it so certain that ‘ dysgenics ’ is the cause of the danger hanging over it ? Or is dysgenics one of the symptomatic effects of a far greater cause

<sup>1</sup> My own knowledge is confined to England. It is evident that in e.g. America, the conditions are different. There the mass is in no sense homogeneous, and is composed in part of aliens at a low level of intelligence and training. Hence no doubt the greater gloom of American Eugenists.

of danger inherent in the civilization itself? Let the Sociologist answer the Eugenist, in part at least: 'Dwellers in great cities suffer from an "urban complex", prolific source of anxieties, aberrations, fears, animosities, delusions, and other maleficent neuroses.' 'Every dweller in towns and cities as we know them to-day, poises in perilous instability on the slippery slope that descends to the pit of lunacy. For the more volatile types, our urban *milieu* tends to be a folly factory, and for the more serious types, a lunacy mill.'<sup>1</sup> Exaggerated, you say? Perhaps; yet no doctor will say that the Sociologist's verdict is without a very large measure of truth.

But the matter can be put on far firmer ground. The most tragic aspect of the danger envisaged by the Eugenist is the sheer refusal of the 'good' types to perpetuate themselves. The 'successful' or 'eminent' die out: they simply *will* not breed freely. Why? Is the reason anything else whatever but their too great love of the very civilization which they alone can save? You are going to awaken or create a new conscience in this matter. How can you? Your civilization ties your hands. We appreciate it: we love it; we are devoted to it. You yourself told us that was our virtue. Will you tell us now to forgo our enjoyment of it—in order to breed babies? For that is what it comes to. We cannot have both—the fullness of our civilized life *and* the large family. Our needed environment of complex enjoyments swallows up all our income—and more; even as husband and wife alone, we cannot keep pace with its demands. The due appreciation of it all needs all and more than all our time: how can we women give up our best years to the bearing and upbringing of children?

What is the Eugenist to answer? Shall he babble about growing a new conscience? But why want a new conscience, if it will kill our power of enjoying our civilization? You say self-denial is a necessary part of our duty as the handers-on of civilization, as the guardians of our heritage. But so long as people are in love with comfort, what use is it to tell them that self-denial will prove a better wife? So long as we are devoted to our present luxury, are we likely to listen to the Eugenic beatitude 'Blessed are the big breeders, for their stock shall inherit civilization'? Who cares what the third and fourth

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from V. V. Branford, in the *Sociological Review*, January, 1925.

generation inherit? We want our civilization *now*—to use and enjoy.

Truly the Eugenist is like the poor doctor, whose rich patient orders him to cure his indigestion—but on no account interfere with his food. Every day the pains of our civilization make themselves more acutely felt. But we have no intention of giving up our plum-pudding.

In very truth, the Eugenist must go back to Plato, whom he hails as the first eugenist. Perhaps he was the only great one. And his greatness lies in two things, whereby he is very sharply separated from his modern followers. First, the sole 'survival values' which he recognized at all were the hard qualities of temperance, fortitude, justice, and the wisdom which knows that all complexities are evil. Secondly, his golden class—the eminent and successful people—were those alone who had learned to live without comfort, without luxury, without money, rejoicing in poverty and the sheer bareness of life, discarding all the trimmings of civilization as hindrances and vanities, desiring no new thing—not even new science and inventions—finding their happiness only in stark simplicity. These were the unchanging marks of the real guardians and exemplars of 'civilization'; these were they in whose hands the present and the future of society could be safely left.

The modern Eugenist has travelled very far beyond Plato—as have all of us highly civilized and very superior people.<sup>1</sup> And our journey has brought us to the point at which we have to recognize that the Eugenist, hugging his complexities, is offering as a cure for our ills only one more device of ingenuity having for its aim the difficult task of enabling us to eat our cake and keep it.

The Eugenist, as we have seen, traces most of our troubles to the existence in certain individuals—we might say, in certain individual germ-plasms—of defects which are incorrigible, ineradicable, and fixed. The Psychologist also finds the seat of trouble in the individual, but more hopefully situated; for the mind is both accessible and tractable, while the germ-plasm is neither. The most modern psychologist, however, unlike his predecessors, has discovered (or re-discovered) the sub-conscious mind, and to this devotes most of his attention. We

<sup>1</sup> Except, perhaps, Dr. Inge, the most persistently reasonable of modern eugenists. But I think even his Platonism wears a little thin when he thinks eugenically.

are all his followers—at the moment ; and that makes the task of criticism difficult. I suppose nearly a quarter of the educated world of the West now goes to sleep whispering to its subconsciousness strange statements not quite in accordance with facts, which it trusts to that unknown power to turn into truth by morning.<sup>1</sup> And more than a quarter of us talk about the psycho-analytic treatment of complexes as confidently as our fathers talked about the open-air treatment of tuberculosis.

Now I have not the least desire to deride the power of auto-suggestion or the truth in psycho-analysis. The former at any rate is too old and well tried a power to be treated with anything but respect. It has been known and used by devotees of religion in all parts of the world for many centuries, though the purpose in view was usually a rather nobler one than is fashionable to-day. We use it to drive away our pains and to impress upon our souls the image of health. They used it to drive away evil desires and to impress upon their souls the image of holiness. Whatever the aim, it can be attained—by the faithful. But it is difficult not to feel some amusement at the childish enthusiasm with which we all run after each new thing, confident, for the moment, that this at last will realize our hopes. And in the matter of psycho-analysis the enthusiasm has undoubtedly done harm, leading to much ignorant and dangerous tampering with a method of treatment which requires very great judgment and restraint.

Stated very simply, the discovery of psycho-analysis is this. In many individuals a condition of misery or of sinfulness exists which is directly caused by the presence in the subconscious mind of impulses which have, as it were, lost their way and never found a natural door of escape. These impulses or trains of impulse may have arisen from the natural impulses which every mind contains, or they may have been started by some impression from outside. Impressions of fear are the most common cause under the latter head ; suppressions or distortions of the sex-impulse are the most common cause under the former head. In each case, a train of impulse is set going which, unable to issue forth naturally and work itself out in action, has pursued a circular course within the subconscious mind, becoming ever more complicated, entangling itself with other healthier impulses, and thwarting or distorting these in in-

<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1924. Doubtless the ' Coué craze ' has now (in 1927) died down.



creasing degree. Hence the name given to it of a complex. The condition can only be cured by opening the door and enabling the coiled up poisonous influence to come out and roll away. As the condition is often accompanied by more or less hysteria, hypnosis can often be used to facilitate the process. But the cure is not simple nor easy ; and in unskilled hands the treatment may be most dangerous.

I think the best medical psychologists would agree with me that the results to be expected from this discovery are by no means unlimited. Yet it has been hailed as a discovery so momentous and far-reaching as to provide a solution for nearly all our difficulties. Mr. H. G. Wells has even discarded in its favour all his former schemes for the forcible salvation of society, and found the satisfactory fulfilment of all his hopes under the psycho-analytic creed. This, I admit, was a year ago. It is probable that, in the interval, so versatile a reformer has discovered an even newer and more certain panacea. It can hardly be libellous to call such enthusiasm unbalanced. For a little sober reflection will show that the psycho-analyst's contribution to the cause of betterment, like the Eugenist's contribution, helps us very decidedly with many of our ' worst cases ', but leaves the general problem of social ill very much where it was before. I will put this bluntly in psychological form. Within the human soul there is coiled a complex which no analysis or skill can extract or change. We may call it, for brevity, the Ego ; and it is mighty in every one of us. It distorts all our impulses, forcing them to circle always round the self. It is the cause of the deadliest evil known—selfishness ; and there is no cure for this disease. Whatever else is cured, this remains ; and while it remains, all our most patent dangers only grow stronger as we gain knowledge and power. Wars continue and become more terrible, strife of groups continues and becomes more bitter, as ambitions are more clearly visualized and desired ends are pictured in fuller detail. Within the group, individuals—the *sanest* individuals—push on to attain their ends past and over other individuals. The half-sleeping groups and units awake, and, impelled by the same conscious desires, join in the competitive struggle. One social complex after another arises, which we have no time to resolve, no knowledge to analyse, and not enough goodwill to spare for the task of grappling with them. Diseases increase : we hurry on, calling for new serums. Discontent increases : we suppress it

when we can, drug it when we can't, and in the end join its army in despair or let it sweep us away.

That is the world to-day, as a cynic might describe it, and not be guilty of great exaggeration. To make the picture true, we bring in hope—not certain, but reasonable hope—that another power is working both within us and without, blunting the edge of hatred, curbing the force of aggression, softening the bitterness of competitive strife, and in the end perhaps capable of weaning us away from the complexities which are mastering us. But the power is not psycho-analysis, nor any other science.

Like the eugenist, the psycho-analyst brings us a specific remedy for a part of our ills. Like the physician, he offers us a new and valuable treatment for certain definite ailments. But the growing *malaise* of our world remains ; it is not lessened ; it is not really touched. For we find that each of these healers is really offering to heal nothing more than one or two of the *new* diseases which appear to be the inevitable incidents of our increasing civilization. No one needed the eugenic treatment until a generation or two ago ; natural forces weeded out the unfit at one end, and natural forces kept up the supply of the fit at the other end. No one felt the dire need of the psycho-analyst until a century or two ago. Before that, people do not appear to have suffered from complexes : they suffered from sin, and the simple old-fashioned remedies were enough. Is it not just possible that Plato was right here too, and that the multiplication of specialists to cure our special diseases is itself the proof that our life is at fault, and that *our* disorder is the cause of these other disorders ?

I can hear the ready answer to all this. Our forefathers escaped our troubles because they did not *care* enough to notice them. They were hard men ; they were callous men, who let the tooth and claw of nature kill her victims with all her usual cruelty, ruthlessness and unfairness. They did not care about the suffering, provided only the road was kept clear for them. They let the children, sound and unsound, die off through sheer neglect ; they let the sick poor rot to death when even a little help in cleanliness would have saved them. They left the leper to wander alone until he died ; they burned witches because they were afraid to try to understand them ; they hanged with a light heart the men and women whose ' crime ' was only the inevitable outcome of the conditions forced upon them. They

gained their freedom from our difficulties—at a price. Thank heaven, we are not now barbarians enough to pay that price. We are out to cure or tend the sick wherever sickness is found, even though the disease is the plain result of wilful vice. We are out to save the children whatever may be their ancestry, even though they are tainted for life with the poisons transmitted to them by unfit parents. We are out to treat sin as itself an ailment, needing hospital and doctor rather than prison and executioner. Is not this progress, in the sense you say is the only true one—improving the relations between man and man by sympathy, help and goodwill?

Of course you are right, in part. But may it not be as well to complete the picture? We are not hard nor callous now—at any rate not so hard. And in one direction our greater gentleness, flowing outwards and downwards towards those who are below us on the ladder of success or welfare, is all a virtue, all progressive, all good, in spite of its heavy cost. But the other side? Let us be honest and own that we are soft in the wrong place as well as in the right. We are soft to ourselves, as our forefathers were not; and *that* is the real cause of our troubles. I have shown—I think it is beyond question—that the greatest difficulty the eugenist has to face is not the multiplication of the unfit but the voluntary decay of the fit. And what is the cause of that except our too great softness? The solution is plain before us: give up your ease and comfort and the ‘refinements’ of enjoyment for twenty years, and devote yourself to the hardships of parentage. But we are not strong enough to do it. The danger that lies in the hopes and promises of the psycho-analyst is not the danger of mistaken treatment, but a far subtler one. We are growing too soft and too sensitive to talk boldly of sin and the punishment it deserves, because that cap is apt to fit us all. So we hail with enthusiasm a new doctrine which turns sin into abnormality and allows us to believe that what our hard fathers would have called our wickednesses are only the result of unfortunate complexes in that part of the mind which is beyond our control. Is not that decadence? Or is it a false instinct which makes us distrust ourselves when we can no longer say courageously ‘This man is a sinner and deserves to be punished’?

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

**I**N the last four chapters we have considered the most vital remedies for the most obvious ills of society. Each of these remedies might, if effective, free us from many of our worst difficulties: in that sense they may be called radical. The re-forming of economic structure is intended to get rid of the unfairnesses and oppressions which are the chief hindrances to a free and happy life for all; education is trusted by some to raise to a higher level our power of dealing rightly with life, and therefore of living well; eugenic reform is relied upon to free us from the drags upon the wheel of progress, and to purify our peoples from those innate defects which make a good life impossible; psychological science looks forward to curing us all of the mental complexities which lead to sin and misery. If it were possible to attempt a full survey of remedies, we should also consider many other existing modes of reform. It is not from lack of appreciation that I omit the discussion of the efforts of those armies of social workers who are trying in different ways to relieve suffering and want, to purify environment, to protect and help those who are exposed to needless temptations or to restore those who have fallen victims to those temptations. But it is clear that these efforts are not, in the same sense, radical. They do not attempt to change the fabric of the social structure nor the stuff of which the citizens are made. Even the vast work of improving the health of the community and increasing the normal span of life—whether by purging the environment of its most unhygienic elements, or by directly combating disease—does not fall into the category of attempts to change radically the fundamental conditions of character and circumstance from which social harmony or disharmony flows.

But the deepest of all 'reforms' has not yet been touched at all. Of it something must be said in this concluding chapter. I must, however, beg the reader not to expect an adequate



treatment of the subject, for indeed I am not competent to furnish this. And I would also beg him not to regard this chapter as in any sense a summary of our preceding discussions, but only as an attempt to emphasize certain points, and so to lead on to a tentative conclusion.

The conditions which our happiness requires are twofold : first, that we should, as individuals, possess the capacity to live well ; secondly, that we should, as citizens, co-operate to provide for one another certain apparently simple requirements. The first condition is, and must be, taken for granted ; not, of course, because it is a safe assumption, but only because it is outside the scope of a social inquiry to consider how each individual soul can be made capable of happiness. But in taking it for granted, we are brought up against the question—Is not this first condition itself dependent upon the fulfilment of the second condition ? That is to say, is not *all* my capacity for happiness really dependent upon the influence of my society upon me ? Is not this co-operation of citizens for the purpose of general happiness the sole determinant of the possibility of happiness for any and every individual citizen ? This question we refused to answer in the affirmative, since an affirmative answer commits us to assumptions or conclusions which are not compatible with any tenable philosophy in which such words as purpose and will are used. Especially it commits us to the conception of the individual as being *nothing* except an insignificant product of the social environment, present and past ; of society as the only being of which any reality can be predicated ; while all individual members are merely the short-lived cells which derive all their fleeting significance from it. To give any meaning at all to life—even to give a meaning to our talk about life and progress—we are compelled to assume that the individual is real, and that the organized co-operation in which, as a citizen, he lives, is *only* an organization, however complex, built up, sustained, and vivified by *his* purposes.

But the organization is not thereby in its turn reduced to insignificance. It possesses and retains for you and me all the importance which belongs to any chosen plan or scheme of life which each of us wills for himself ; and the added importance of a plan or scheme of life sustained through and beyond our individual lives, by the very fact that it represents the scheme devised and chosen by us all. That is to say, in making the organized co-operation which we call our society, we make

something, in a sense, greater than ourselves ; not only greater (as of course it must be) than any one of us, but greater than all of us at any moment existing, because in its building all past generations have taken a hand, and because much of its structure and purpose will outlive all present citizens. Not only so : the organized co-operation is not merely an organization with long-lasting structure and institutions, but is also a living environment of fellow-souls in which we are all merged. Consequently, despite our fine assumption that only you and I, as individuals, are the reality of society, society comes back upon us with all the force of a determining and all-pervading environment, compared with which our little individual realities once again sink into insignificance.

So, whatever our initial view may be, we seem unable to escape the feeling that society itself overshadows us all. By its mass and power and colossal importance it seems to reduce to nothing both our power and our responsibility. And the temptation is strong to say—What am I that I can or should do anything except obey? How can my little will count? And if (since we cannot really acquiesce and submit so long as we are not happy) we insist upon making some effort to improve things, then very naturally we fall back upon the only device open to little people : we band ourselves together in a concerted effort to change some part of the oppressive or hindering structure.

In the firm belief that this attitude is fatally mistaken, not in its trust in concerted effort, but in its faith in structural change, I have marshalled what arguments I can upon the other side. Especially do I plead for a change of attitude to all social difficulties, which shall compel us all to regard them first from their real starting point—in ourselves. This is of paramount importance in connexion with the difficulties which loom largest to-day—the difficulties connected with economic unfairnesses. It is not the least use our discussing the ‘ sickness of an acquisitive society ’ unless we first discuss the greedy me and you who *are* that society. It is useless to consider the tyranny of employers or of the wage-system, unless we first examine the use which you and I are making of the ‘ employer ’ element and the ‘ owner ’ power in ourselves, in relation to our own work and the use of our own possessions, and in relation to the people whom, in small or great degree, these powers of ours affect. For all our difficulties really come back at last to

you and me and our handling of life : even the impersonal problem of the unmanageable size of our societies is seen, in the last analysis, to be a reflection of the problem of the magnitude of *my* desires and *my* passion for complex activity. Complexity baffles us on all sides just because *we* are so un-simple.

But concerted action remains as the necessary method. Not only because no one of us can be *good* by himself, nor because my efforts alone are likely to be very feeble, but because my purposes, however well-willed, cannot develop sanely without the constant contact with others. We really do live by taking in one another's thoughts : as citizens, at any rate, we must accept this as a condition of progressive purpose. More than this. Our feeling and thinking is seldom a solitary process—never an isolated process. We cannot, if we would, escape from community of feeling ; and it is just this condition of the citizen life which compels us to combine ceaselessly in reforming effort. The good citizen cannot exclude from his consciousness *any* of his neighbours : their unhappiness must therefore destroy *his* happiness ; it darkens the common environment of minds in which we are all merged ; we *must* go out to change it. And this very condition of community compels us to unite with all other citizens who share our aim whenever we take up the task of 'improving' ourselves or others.

Consequently we are led on to the second of our two conditions of happiness : namely, that we shall, as citizens, co-operate to provide for one another the requirements of happiness. These requirements we assumed to be both simple and (at first sight) easy of attainment for all normal citizens. The assumption remains an assumption : it cannot be proved. But at least we found reason to think that the essential requirements only become complex and difficult of attainment when we read into them more than they should or need contain. Thus, the essential condition of work is at once put out of the reach of a normal society if we insist that all work must be creative (in any but a very broad sense), and still more if we insist that it must be artistic or satisfying to an artist. Such conditions as these demand a totally changed world. So too the essential element of companionship and interests can very easily be made unattainable if we quarrel with certain fundamental groupings, such as the family, or insist upon a freedom of choice which no ordinary citizen can possess. For, after all, in the matter of all these conditions, we must—if we care



to put it so—pay the triple penalty of belonging to an organized society, of belonging to a very complex industrial society, and of belonging to a society whose standards and tastes are always imperfect. But, as we have seen, the essential freedom of choice for the individual is not thereby destroyed.

We have, however, found certain obstacles to the general attainment of the necessary conditions of happiness which we cannot argue away. Thus, in regard to the provision of satisfactory work for all, we found that neither the existing organization nor any suggested re-organization meets our requirements. We reduced the meaning of 'satisfactory' to its simplest terms: the work need not be congenial, in the sense of being what you or I would like best to do; it may be for most of us just a task to be done dutifully; but it must be *ours*, in the sense of a possession from which we may not be arbitrarily separated; and it must satisfy our accepted conception of fairness, in regard both to the conditions of its performance and to the terms of its recompense. But even with this simplified meaning, satisfactory work for all is not yet within sight. And the cause of this defect is not hard to find. It was seen to lie in the very simple fact that you and I do not yet *care* enough about our neighbours' well-being in comparison with our own.

Other defects we have found, deep-seated in the social environment, which prevent the diffusion of desired elements of happiness, not only in the form of material equipment dependent upon the use of wealth, but in the form of more important immaterial equipment, such as knowledge and health and sense of security. All these defects in turn may be traced to complexities or imperfections in the structure, activities and devices of civilized society; but again, if we look closer, we see behind these the imperfections of will and purpose on the part of you and me.

So far, we have considered the social good as consisting in the happiness of the individual universalized into a possession of all citizens. But the implications of the individual's happiness are not grasped so long as our attention is directed to the individual. I explained at the outset that happiness is not merely a self-consistent harmony within the individual consciousness, in the sense of a harmony of feeling and activity, however broadly interpreted. We must go behind this to the fundamental harmony between the individual consciousness and all reality outside, if happiness is to be complete and real.



And for the citizen the significance of this is clear. For many of us, for large classes of us, the necessary conditions of happiness may be fulfilled. But our happiness will be and *ought* to be prevented by the consciousness that the conditions are not shared by all our neighbours. They, at any rate, are part of that outside reality with which we must feel in harmony ; they are therefore necessary partners with us in the work of making our own happiness. And this is the fundamental fact of the social good and of the individual good ; and realization of this fact would be the one solvent of all our difficulties.

Why do we not realize it ? Shall we merely reply that it is because you and I have not yet been educated in social sympathy—in that essential ‘ sociality ’ which would never allow us to rest so long as any part of the social ‘ body ’ is in pain or want ? This is true enough ; but I think there is another reason—or the same reason presented in a different way. It is this : the fuller harmony which our happiness requires, depends, for social beings, upon the possession of a common scheme or pattern of the good life, and a firm faith that it can be made real. And this is just what we have not got ; more than this, we do not even try to get it.

At this point, I become painfully aware of the impatient criticism which will be urged once more by the practical citizen—if indeed any practical citizen has followed me so far. What does it *mean*, this pattern of a good life ? We all know what we want, and we all know what we do not want. We are fairly well agreed about the evils that exist in our society ; for heaven’s sake let us get to work and deal with them. How do you, the self-appointed philosopher, help us by talking about an imaginary pattern of goodness which we must first find and then follow ?

Let us have our last bout together. You will not deny that society is a spiritual organization, whose mainspring is *will*. Every part of it, its structure, its movements, its quality and significance, depend upon the wills of us citizens, who, by our lives and activities, make it *a society*. Our wills, we say, are motivated by our desires and feelings ; but, as characters, we possess—or *are*—wills which run deeper than this, and are motivated, over long periods, by our accepted scale of values and the organized purposes (based on these) which give coherence to our personalities. Consequently, we had better say that society is made up and inspired by wills which are themselves

the expression of scales and standards of values accepted by each individual. But this is tantamount to saying that every one of us is really the possessor of *some* pattern of goodness, and is motivated by this pattern in all his considered actions (apart from passionate outbreaks); and further, that society itself derives its qualities of good or evil from the sum total of these patterns. So the practical man is himself really referring to *a* pattern of the good life whenever, as a citizen, he thinks at all. The philosopher does not ask him to find and follow a new thing, but only to make the existing thing right or true; and then to make it the real determinant of his social actions. For of course our defect is always a double one: we do not try very hard to make our pattern a true one; and we do not try very persistently to substitute the values which we know to be true for the values which we know to be false, though very attractive to the self.

And when the philosopher asserts that the social good depends, in the last resort, upon all citizens *willing* the good life, he is not saying anything abstruse or remote from common experience. We do in fact—even the most practical of us—try all the time to realize our own happiness by willing what we imagine to be the good life for ourselves; every decent parent tries, most of the time, to realize the family good by willing what he or she imagines to be the good life for the family; and every thoughtful citizen tries, occasionally, to realize the social good by willing what he or she imagines to be the good life for society. But, unfortunately, we only do so occasionally; and, more unfortunately still, we are very prone to let our ‘imagined’ scheme of the good life be coloured much more with our prejudices and self-interests than with our real convictions of good.

Thus it will be seen that social philosophy is not up in the clouds at all. It is intensely practical: its simple advice is—Go on doing what you are doing now—only do it better and more completely. The co-operation of wills upon which the social good depends makes only two demands upon us. First, that we shall furnish our wills with the best possible pattern of the good; and secondly, that we shall, by our willing, infuse this pattern into the whole of our social life. Nor does this second demand call upon us to do for society anything more than we already do for our individual lives. That is to say, it is only an extension of a process with which, as individual self-

seekers, we are perfectly familiar. But the task remains a big one ; and no half-measures will serve. The pattern of the good life is not to be painted on the surface of society, but dyed into the stuff and texture of it from top to bottom. And for that task, nothing short of the concerted action of *all* wills can in the end avail.

Then after all, we cannot hope for the realization of the social good until each one of us wills his neighbours' good with the same intensity with which he wills his own ? That is not a possible conclusion : we cannot *be* our neighbours. The true conclusion is much simpler : every step in social progress has for its condition—its *only* condition—some extension of social sympathy in the form of a projection of your and my will beyond the limits of self-interest or narrow group-interest, inspired by a pattern of goodness acceptable to both you and me in our best moments. And no progress can be made on any other terms.

Does this conclusion help us ? I have an uneasy suspicion that few readers will find any vital meaning in it ; and that is perfectly natural. We are fond of repeating such phrases as ' a scale of values ' and ' a pattern of the good life ' : but for most of us the phrases are arid and meaningless. They are like the famous dictum of Socrates, that Virtue is Knowledge : an interesting but useless assertion, so long as we consider it from the view-point of intellectual concepts, but a profound and moving truth, as soon as we realize that *knowledge* means the glad identification of the soul with the Reality of Good which is known. Let it then be understood that our ' estimate of values ' is not an intellectual act, but a fact of feeling, a set of the whole current of emotion and desire. I cannot express it by saying that I know or think or believe such and such principles to be true, such and such elements of experience to be important. I can express it only by saying ' This is what I love, and this is what I hate '. Moreover, the values all involve relations of me to my world : they are the definitions of these relations, as I see and feel them. And the world that really matters is the world of my fellow-souls. The all-important questions, therefore, are these : Where do I place myself in relation to all of you ? What are *you* in relation to me ? What do you count for ? From the answers to these questions there follow all morality, all idealism, all the conditions of social good. And when an answer is found which satisfies both you and me, then

all other differences in our value-estimates become unimportant. You may hug a scheme of political values very different from mine : but what do you or I now care ? Why need either of us care at all, if we differ in tastes or interests, in our attitude to art or science or literature ? We *cannot* differ in fundamentals now, since we stand on the same rock of values—the value of ourselves in relation to one another.

But when we ask—How shall the true relationship of you to me be both discovered and made real ?—we are forced to go a step farther in the search for the source of true values and of the will to realize them. At the outset, I defined the essential elements of society as consisting in you and me—and God. We agreed to leave out of account the third term in the relation ; but with the proviso that we might be compelled to restore it at the last. Is not this the time to restore it, and to admit boldly that the relation between you and me, which we have so long considered, has no final meaning apart from the relation of us both to God ? I for one cannot, if I would, escape this conclusion. And yet, if we put it in its customary form, and assert that we must finally turn to religion for our guidance, the conclusion seems just a little lame to many of us, and more than a little unphilosophical. Why ? For what reason does it seem unsatisfactory ? Why, at any rate, does it fail to satisfy the reformer—I do not mean only the professed reformer, but the reforming impulse in every good citizen ? Why, in fact, does our anxiety for reform drive us to explore any avenue, consider any device, pin our faith to any plan—except this ? There are many who would reply at once that religion has not yet become *the* vital reality for the world, or even for that part of the world which professes to be religious. I would rather say that the reason lies in the simple fact that *no* religion has yet brought its faith into full contact with the market place, has yet fused into one the relation of the soul to God and the relation of the soul to its neighbour, has yet presented the pattern of the good in a form which is easily applicable to the social lives of men. I do not mean that the social teaching is absent : the all-embracing command ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ is clearly enough proclaimed : but it is not made *real*. Again, I do not mean to imply that the professed faith of millions of citizens is not itself a real faith. The persistent piety which permeates some of the most progressive communities may have no pretence about it : the multi-



millionaire who spends his declining years in building churches may not be a hypocrite, any more than any comfortable church-goer who devotes his best energies to pushing his business, and exhausts his citizen-interests in efforts to keep the working classes in their place. But the *social* applications of religion are wanting: is not that the chief reason why so many proletarian movements are essentially non-religious or even anti-religious? Bring it down to earth, they seem to say; show it to us at work as *the* great regenerative force among all the muddles and oppressions which stand between us and a decent life; and *then* we will respect it.

Are they wrong? We call upon them to have faith in God and in his power to save; but they would rather have faith in their neighbour and in his goodwill, and faith in themselves and in his and their power to save themselves. Can we blame them? Or is it just an illusion to imagine that there can be no day of salvation for any of us until the God in heaven is realized also as the God on earth, dwelling in every stable and carpenter's shop and humble home of the poor, in every office and comfortable home of the rich, ready and powerful to unite us all as neighbours in the saving co-operation of goodwill?

When one tries to see the social good as just one aspect of God's good for the human soul, one feels that both religion and philosophy have failed so far to grasp the full significance of the Great Society of to-day. Their expounders still tread the old streets, but they are not the streets in which life calls loudest now. All of us who are in any way thinkers, teachers, guides, are at fault: we have not yet discovered that the human world is *new*, and calls for a re-defining of old truth. Nothing vague will serve. The old shibboleths may be sound enough: brotherhood, love and sacrifice hold all the universe of good in their embrace. But they are *tired*: repetition has worn them too smooth to grip and hold us. We must re-mould their eternal verity in much more detailed and intimate shapes to-day. The impulses of the masses are leading them to do this in their own way. But, with all respect for the generosity of those impulses, we know that much labour will be wasted and many avoidable mistakes made if they are left unguided. They turn to Science for guidance—that most excellent of helpers, but least excellent of guides, for the simple reason that it has no sure knowledge of the values upon which life depends. Until they—and all of us—turn for guidance to the source of

certainty which is beyond science, beyond all human ingenuity or discovery, we may dream about progress and the good life for all, but the dream will not come true. And the ultimate 'problem' of the social good is just this: how shall we bring this source of certainty into such close relation to all our purposes that there shall be no room left for any real clash of interests between you and me?

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